

ARCHE

SUPPLEMENTS TO  
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

*Formerly Philosophia Patrum*

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE  
AND LANGUAGE

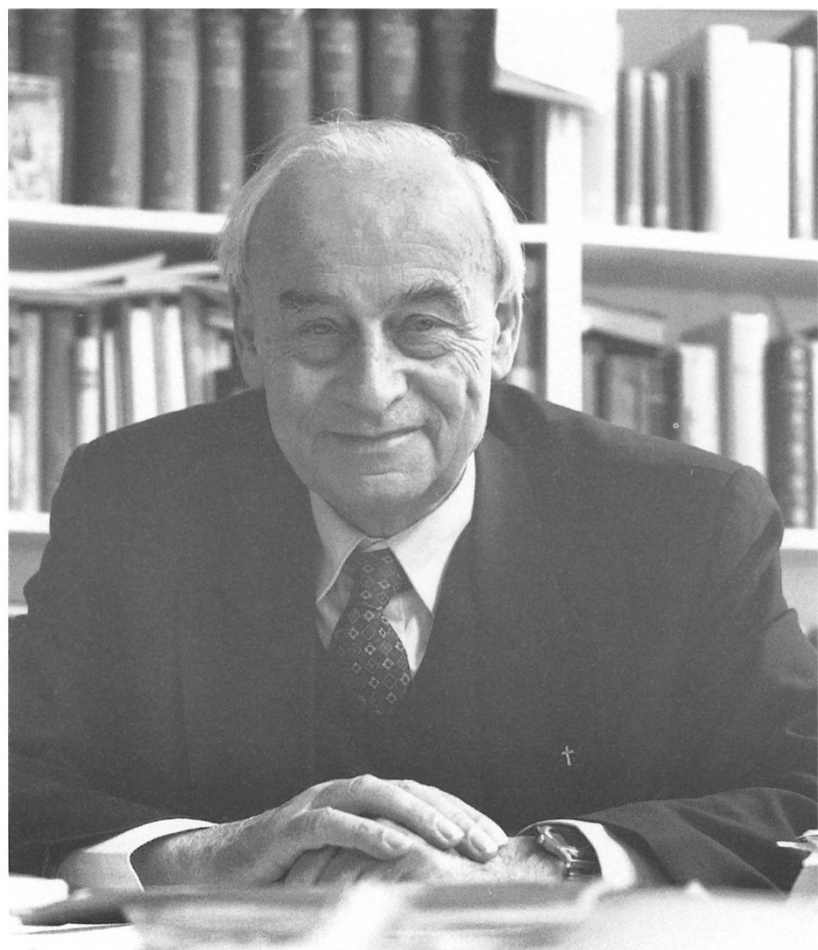
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VOLUME XLI







# ARCHE

A COLLECTION OF PATRISTIC STUDIES

BY

J.C.M. VAN WINDEN

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## INTRODUCTION

On the outside wall of the buildings of the Hartebrug church in the middle of the old city of Leiden one can see a sculptured plaque which depicts the encounter of St. Francis of Assisi with the wolf of Gubbio. The holy man brought that dangerous beast under control not through the use of force, as Heracles had done in the case of the Hydra and the Nemean lion, but through the power of his conciliatory words. 'Brother wolf' he called him. The wolf allowed himself to be persuaded to better his ways and as a sign of his new life he placed his front paw in the hand of St. Francis. This scene is depicted on the plaque mentioned above. Just next to it is the vicarage of the church, part of the large house at Haarlemmerstraat 106, where the Franciscan Bertram van Winden has lived for many years, since 1992 as Parish priest.

Jacobus Cornelis Maria van Winden received the name Bertram in 1941, when at the youthful age of 19 he entered the Franciscan order. The period of theological and pastoral training which followed was completed in 1948, when he was ordained as priest. A further important turning-point in his life occurred in 1949, when he began to study classical languages at the university of Leiden. There he attended the lectures of the Professor of Latin, Jan Hendrik Waszink, the beginning of a close relationship that would continue until the latter's death in 1990, first as pupil and assistant, later as colleague and personal friend. After the completion of his degree he commenced on a teaching career. First he was appointed classics master at St. Francis College in Rotterdam. In the early sixties he commenced teaching at his alma mater, the university of Leiden. In 1967 he was appointed reader, and from 1980 onwards he occupied the chair of Later Greek literature until his retirement in 1987.

It is perhaps unexpected that a pupil of Waszink should obtain a professorship in this area of classical studies. A glance at his dissertation which he defended in 1959, however, will soon dispel any surprise. As its title *Calcidius on Matter* indicates, it concentrates on a Patristic philosophical text written in Latin. But the sub-title 'A Chapter in the History of Platonism' adds an extra dimension. Not only Calcidius' own insights are investigated, but also his relation

to a large number of philosophical sources, most of which were written in Greek. This study, his first significant publication, already reveals what were to become the hallmarks of his scholarly method, the inextricable combination of philological precision and penetrating philosophical analysis.

In chapter 276 of his Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, Calcidius discusses the views of Jewish authors on the 'beginning', putting forward as their leading idea that it was an *initium minime temporarium* (a beginning not to be understood in temporal terms). This passage is analysed in the dissertation on pp. 53 ff. It forms the beginning of Bertram's passionate interest in and extensive study of a theme to which he returned at regular intervals, the philosophical and theological interpretations of the opening words of Genesis in early Christian thought.

In more general terms, the chief focus of Bertram's scholarly *œuvre* has been the study of the rational defense of the central truths of the Christian faith. To this the many detailed studies included in this volume bear witness. The expertise which he built up in this area in the course of decades of study was also given expression in a more general work written in Dutch, *De ware wijsheid: wegen van vroeg-christelijk denken* (*True Wisdom: Paths of Early Christian Thought*, Baarn 1992). The 'paths' that are sketched in loving detail and often by means of extensive quotations from the early Christian authors themselves are above all those of Justin Martyr, Origen and Eusebius, who set themselves the task to prove that 'Christianity could pass the test of the Greek norm, rational justification'. It becomes clear from reading that book—perhaps clearer than in the remainder of his *œuvre*—that Bertram's interest in this question does not merely stem from purely scholarly concerns, but is also a consequence of his Christian conviction. His published work is the product of a man who is both a scholar and a firmly committed and deeply engaged believer, for whom rational thought does not offer a threat, but rather the opportunity to deepen one's faith.

In this faith the central position is occupied by the *arché*, the first principle and foundation of all things. In the beginning was the Word, but the Word was also the first principle, according to the interpretation of Basil. Other church fathers too made use of their intellectual talents in order to elucidate the meaning and implications of the concept of *arché* in Genesis 1. In their view the term

should not only, or not even primarily, be understood in temporal terms, in order to provide a chronological framework for the creation event, but above all to denote the foundation or even primary substrate, so to speak, from which God commenced his creative work: *Dominus condidit me initium viarum suarum in opera sua* (The Lord founded me as the beginning/principle of his ways towards his works, Prov. 8:22 in the Latin version used by Tertullian).

The present collection of articles is published in the series Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*. This furnishes us with an excellent opportunity to thank Bertram for the unremitting care and devotion with which he has nurtured both the series and its mother journal during the past twenty years. In this task the same qualities that he has shown in his other scholarly work come strongly to the fore. In the adjudication of manuscripts he is always strict and exact, especially when they have to do with the translation and interpretation of primary texts. At the same time he is constructive and encouraging towards authors whose work shows promise, provided of course errors are corrected and shortcomings repaired. His dedication to the journal and its readers is unconditional and complete. Thanks to the leadership the editorial team of *Vigiliae Christianae* has been able to continue its service to the scholarly world at a high level.

In his own scholarly work and in his promotion of the welfare of early Christian studies and its practitioners, Bertram van Winden has always remained true to himself: faith and intellect are nourished by a single *Arché*, from which each draws what it needs according to its nature. Greek rationality with its numerous achievements is not a threatening monster that has to be coerced into submission, but a creature made by God that can be brought to see the light of true reason, a brother rather than an enemy. The sculpted plaque in Haarlem Street in Leiden gives expression to the achievement of St. Francis in the eyes of his contemporaries, but at the same time it is able to symbolize something of the inspiration that has given direction to the life and work of one of his modern followers.

Our beloved teacher, colleague and friend Bertram van Winden will reach the venerable age of seventy-five years on October 10th 1997. Some time ago we decided to celebrate that event with a volume of studies. Rather than put together a conventional Fest-

schrift, we thought it might be more valuable to collect some of the scholarly work that he has published in a wide variety of journals and other publications during the past four decades. This plan also gave us the opportunity to publish work that has hitherto been unavailable to most readers. In the first place an important survey article on the theme of the *arché* in Patristic thought, which has been lying around in proof for more than twenty years can now see the light of day (the first article in the collection). Secondly we decided it would be a good idea to translate and publish a number of important contributions that were originally written in Dutch. These include Bertram's inaugural address on taking up his readership in 1967, his valedictory lecture in 1987, and two papers which he presented to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which he has been a member since 1981. As a glance at his bibliography will confirm, we have not been able to include all his published papers. Our selection has concentrated on five areas of concern: first and foremost the theme of the *arché* in early Christian thought; secondly various essays on the Greek church fathers with particular emphasis on the writings and thought of Gregory of Nyssa; thirdly some articles on the Hellenistic-Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria, whose work anticipates a number of important Patristic themes; fourthly some brief textual notes on the great Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus; and finally a number of essays on the theme of the relation between Greek philosophy and early Christian thought, the broader theme which has occupied Bertram van Winden in his scholarly work throughout the years. To two of the articles we have appended book reviews dealing with the same subject, which shed extra light on the articles' contents. These may be taken as representative of the enormous number of book reviews that Bertram has published, almost exclusively in *Vigiliae Christianae*. Their tone is unfailingly courteous and constructive; the judgment they give is based on long experience and carries great authority. These reviews constitute one of the scholarly activities for which he is best known. A full list of Bertram's book reviews is presented in the bibliography.

The articles have been presented in the form that they were published. Numbers in square brackets refer to the original pagination. With a very few exceptions no attempt has been made to bring the articles up to date. Given the ongoing march of scholarship this would have been a futile labour.

It is our pleasant duty to thank a large number of people and institutions for the help and cooperation they gave us in carrying out this project. The following institutions and foundations gave generous financial assistance in order to make the translations possible: The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; The Dutch Province of the Order of the Franciscans; The C. J. de Vogel Foundation for the Study of Ancient Philosophy; The Dutch Foundation for Early Christian Studies. The following publishers gave permission to reprint articles originally printed elsewhere: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster; Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris; Peeters, Leuven; Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam; Universitätsverlag C. Winter, Heidelberg.

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Jan den Boeft, David Runia  
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PART ONE

THE ARCHÈ IN EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT



# FRÜHCHRISTLICHE BIBELEXEGESE. 'DER ANFANG'

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## 1. *Einleitung*

Die Exegese der Bibel ist für den Christen aller Zeiten eine sehr wichtige Aufgabe, die ihm als glaubenden Menschen gestellt ist. Das ergibt sich schon aus der Tatsache, daß er glaubt, in den heiligen Büchern Gottes Wort zu finden. Im Laufe der Zeit hat die Exegese sich gewandelt, da die Gläubigen in den verschiedenen Zeiträumen auch immer wieder unterschiedliche Fragen an die

Bibel gestellt haben. Welche Fragen dies waren, war jeweils davon abhängig, wie man diese Bücher betrachtete und welche Funktion man ihnen zuschrieb. Die vorliegende Abhandlung befaßt sich mit der Exegese des frühen Christentums, und zwar jener Periode, in der die Christen bewußt ihre Aufmerksamkeit der Welt, die außerhalb ihres eigenen Kreises stand, zuwandten. Diese Zeitspanne beginnt mit den Apologeten. In der vorhergehenden Zeit der Apostolischen Väter galt das Interesse vor allen Dingen der Glaubensverkündigung im eigenen Kreise. Auch damals gab es natürlich schon Bibelexegese. Man findet sie bereits in den Büchern des Neuen Testaments. Aber erst in der Mitte des zweiten Jahrhunderts wendet man sich bewußt der Welt zu, die unter der Macht des griechischen philosophischen Denkens steht und legt diesem Denken gegenüber Rechenschaft von seinem Glauben ab. Die meisten christlichen Denker jener Zeit waren in dieser Philosophie gebildet und hatten daher das Bedürfnis, sich ihr gegenüber zu verantworten.

Wie sich diese Begegnung zwischen Philosophie und Christentum in der frühchristlichen Exegese auswirkt, soll an Hand der Interpretation des ersten Wortes des ersten Buches der Bibel gezeigt werden: ἐν ἀρχῇ. Um die Entwicklung zu verstehen, muß erst dargelegt werden, wie man das Verhältnis zwischen Bibel und Philosophie sah.

## II. *Bibel und Philosophie*

Man könnte sich den Lauf der Dinge etwa folgendermaßen vorstellen: die frühchristlichen Denker legten die Bücher der Bibel neben die philosophischen Schriften, um Übereinstimmungen und Unterschiede festzustellen. Das könnte die Ursache dafür sein, daß man in den Bibelerklärungen viel philosophisches Material findet. Diese Vorstellung ist jedoch unrichtig. Die Bibel ist für diese Denker nicht ein Buch, das man neben die Bücher der Philosophen legen könnte, sondern sie ist selbst Philosophie.

Vom modernen Denken aus könnte man dies als ein Beispiel schlechter Usurpation ansehen. Vielleicht, so sagt man, kann man voraussetzen, daß die Bibel Philosophie sei, aber ist das nicht ein Mißbrauch des Ausdruckes? Dagegen ist zu sagen, daß die Bedeutung des Wortes 'Philosophie' in jener Zeit wesentlich anders ist als heute. Alles, was mit einer Lebensanschauung in

Zusammenhang stand, wurde 'Philosophie' genannt. Den modernen Unterschied zwischen Theologie und Philosophie gab es nicht. Alles, was als Weisheit (σοφία) gelten konnte, bekam den Namen Philosophie (φιλοσοφία)<sup>1</sup>

Die Anerkennung der Bibel als Philosophie muß jedoch zunächst im Rahmen einer Entwicklung in der griechischen Philosophie gesehen werden. Diese hatte eine große Blütezeit im 4. Jahrhundert gekannt, besonders in den Gestalten von Plato und Aristoteles. In den darauffolgenden Zeiten zeigte die Philosophie jedoch eine gewisse Ermüdung, deren Merkmal in der Akademie die Skepsis ist. Andererseits kommt man in jener Zeit durch die Eroberungen Alexanders des Großen mit anderen Völkern und ihrer Weisheit in Berührung. Von den Schriften dieser Völker geht ein neuer Antrieb auf die griechische Philosophie aus, besonders innerhalb der Stoa, die die Philosophie des Hellenismus ist. Man bewundert die Weisheit der alten Völker, Ägypter, Assyrier, Inder, und man fängt über den Urquell dieser Weisheit zu theoretisieren an. Man gelangt dabei zu folgender Theorie: es gibt gewisse alte Völker, die an einer alten Weisheit Anteil haben, die sie in einer fernen Vergangenheit erworben hatten. Dieser Gedanke steht im Zusammenhang mit der Idee eines goldenen Zeitalters, in dem die Menschen noch in engem Kontakt mit den Göttern standen. Jene Weisheit wurde als das Ergebnis dieses Kontaktes angesehen.

Posidonius ist wahrscheinlich der erste Philosoph, der diese Theorie ausführlich ausgearbeitet hat. Dieser universale Gelehrte aus Apamea hat sich intensiv mit dem Studium der Weisheit der Völker befaßt und zeigen wollen, wie sich der Logos konkret in der Menschheit ausgewirkt hat.

Im Zweiten Jahrhundert nach Christus lebte ein anderer universaler Gelehrter, der dasselbe Interesse für die Weisheit der Völker zeigte, der Pythagoreer Numenius aus Apamea. Im Gegensatz zu Posidonius, der wohl anti-jüdisch<sup>2</sup> war, interessierte er sich sehr für die jüdischen Schriften, welche er offenbar auch zu jenen Büchern der alten Völker rechnete, bei denen die Weisheit zu

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. J.H. Waszink, *Some Observations on the Appreciation of the "Philosophy of the Barbarians" in Early Christian Literature*, *Mélanges Christine Mohrmann*, Utrecht-Anvers, Spectrum, 1963, S. 41.

<sup>2</sup> H. Ch. Puech, *Numenius d'Apamée*, in: *Mélanges Bidez*, Bruxelles, 1934, t. II, S. 645ff.

finden wäre. Von ihm stammt der berühmt gewordene Ausspruch, daß Plato ein attisch sprechender Moses sei. Man kann daraus den Schluß ziehen, daß die Werke von Moses in seinen Augen Philosophie enthielten.

An diese Anschauung schließen die frühchristlichen Denker sich an. So spricht der erste christliche Philosoph, der sich ausdrücklich mit dem Problem des Verhältnisses zwischen Philosophie und Christentum beschäftigt, Justin der Märtyrer, über die Philosophie als eine einzigartige Wissenschaft (μία ἐπιστήμη), die in alten Zeiten zu den Menschen niedergesandt worden ist (κατεπέμφθη εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους).<sup>3</sup> Wie sich aus der weiteren Erörterung ergibt, hat er sein Augenmerk dabei auf die Schriften der Propheten gerichtet, die, als einzige vom heiligen Geist erleuchtet, die Wahrheit gesehen und gehört und der Menschheit verkündigt haben.<sup>4</sup> Die Weisheit, die bei anderen Völkern zu finden ist, stammt deshalb, sofern sie sich auf Überlieferungen<sup>5</sup> gründet, von den Propheten, zu denen an erster Stelle Moses selber gehört. Also ist die Bibel die Quelle aller Philosophie, auch der griechischen.

Wenn man der Frage nachgeht, wie Justin sich die Entwicklung dieser einzigen Philosophie dachte, gelangt man zu einer merkwürdigen Entdeckung. Die Philosophie hat sich nach seiner Ansicht nach demselben Muster wie das Christentum entwickelt. Da ist eine Philosophie vom Himmel niedergesandt worden, so wie auch ein Christentum, in Christus. Durch Mißverständnisse jedoch sind verschiedene Häresien im Christentum entstanden. Auch in der Philosophie ist das der Fall gewesen: die verschiedenen philosophischen Schulen. (Justin behauptet: „Was Philosophie eigentlich ist und warum sie zu den Menschen niedergesandt worden ist, entgeht der großen Masse, sonst würden nicht nebeneinander Platoniker, Stoiker, Peripatetiker usw.

<sup>3</sup> *Dial.* 2.1.

<sup>4</sup> *Dial.* 7.1: Ἐγένοντό τινες πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου πάντων τούτων τῶν νομιζομένων φιλοσόφων παλαιότεροι ... · προφῆτας δὲ αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν. οὗτοι μόνον τὸ ἀληθὲς καὶ εἶδον καὶ ἐξείπον ἀνθρώποις, κτλ. (Es ist schon lange her, da lebten Männer, älter als alle diese sogenannten Philosophen ... Propheten nennt man sie. Sie allein sind es, welche die Wahrheit gesehen und sie den Menschen verkündet haben. Übers. Ph. Haeuser, Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, 1917).

<sup>5</sup> Dieser Vorbehalt ist notwendig, da auch noch mit der Möglichkeit der Kenntnisse durch den *Logos Spermatikos* zu rechnen ist. Cfr. J.H. Waszink, Bemerkungen zu Justinas Lehre vom Logos Spermatikos, in: Mullus: Festschrift Theodor Klauser (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband I), Münster i. W., 1964, S. 380–390.

existieren, da sie eine Wissenschaft ist." *Dial.* 2,1). Ebenso wie die Anhänger der verschiedenen Häresien sich Christen nannten, aber es doch eigentlich gar nicht sind, so nennen die Anhänger der verschiedenen Schulen sich Philosophen, sind es jedoch nicht. Das wahre Christentum ist die rechtmäßige Fortsetzung der einen Urphilosophie.<sup>6</sup>

Kurz nachdem Justin seinen Dialog schrieb, griff Celsus das Christentum an (um 180). Er bedient sich dabei hinsichtlich der Weisheit der alten Völker derselben Theorie wie Justin. Es gibt, so sagt er, eine alte Lehre, die von Anfang an bei den ältesten und weisesten Völkern und bei weisen Männern bekannt gewesen ist.<sup>7</sup> Als Beispiele für solche Völker nennt er einerseits die Inder, Assyrier, Ägypter und Perser, d. h. die bekannten alten Völker aus dem Osten, und andererseits die Odrysen, Samothraker, die Eleusiner und die Hyperboreer, d. h. Völker, die er wahrscheinlich aufzählt, weil sie etwas mit 'Mysterien' zu tun haben sollen, das bedeutet mit einer Realität, in der altes Wissen verkörpert ist.

Als Beispiele weiser Männer nennt Celsus: Linus, Musaeus, Orpheus, Pherecydes, Zoroaster und Pythagoras.<sup>8</sup> Er schließt aber die Juden von den alten Völkern und Moses von den weisen Männern aus. Seiner Ansicht nach war Moses ein Mensch, der, mittels seiner Kenntnisse und seiner Gewandtheit, die er bei den Ägyptern sich angeeignet hatte, sich einen besonderen Ruf erworben hat.<sup>9</sup> Faktisch jedoch ist seine Lehre eine Fälschung von jener der Ägypter und, so argumentiert Celsus weiter, das Christentum ist abermals eine Fälschung der Lehre der Juden: also die Fälschung einer Fälschung. So wie Moses seine Anhänger irregeführt hat, so macht Jesus es mit seinen Jüngern.<sup>10</sup> Es ist eindeutig, daß Celsus mit derselben Theorie arbeitet, wie Justin, aber durch den Ausschluß der Juden von den alten Völkern zu einer entgegengesetzten Folgerung kommt.

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<sup>6</sup> Siehe J.C.M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher. Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*, Chapters one to nine. Introduction, text and commentary (*Philosophia Patrum I*), Leiden, Brill, 1971, S. 42–48; 111–113.

<sup>7</sup> Origenes, *Κατὰ Κέλσου* I 14, 27–31. ἔστιν ἀρχαῖος ἀνωθεν λόγος, περὶ ὃν δὴ αἰεὶ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ σοφώτατα καὶ πόλεις καὶ ἄνδρες σοφοὶ κατεγέγοντο. κτλ. Cf. I 16, 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> *Κατὰ Κέλσου* I 16, 30f.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* I 21; III 5; 46.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* I 26.

Gegen diesen Angriff von Celsus setzt sich ungefähr 70 Jahre später Origenes zur Wehr. Seine Darlegung zielt auf den Hinweis, daß Celsus die Juden zu Unrecht von den alten Völkern und Moses von den weisen Männern ausschließt. Er wirft Celsus vor, daß er mit zweierlei Maß mißt, wenn er sich zu den Historikern der Ägypter und Assyrier bekennt, den Büchern der Juden jedoch nicht traut. Er weist darauf hin, daß dies eine Voreingenommenheit verrät, welche sehr kontrastiert mit dem Verhalten des Philosophen Numenius.<sup>11</sup> Und wenn Celsus anlässlich bestimmter Passagen aus der heiligen Schrift auf das Vorhandensein der gleichen Auffassungen bei den Griechen und anderen Völkern hinweist, um zu beweisen, daß demnach die Worte der Bibel nichts Originelles enthalten, so wird Origenes immer wieder dasselbe Argument anführen, und zwar, daß das jüdische Volk und die jüdischen Schriften älter sind. Er wird sagen, daß wenn die Rede von einer Abhängigkeit ist, die jüngere Schrift abhängig von der Älteren ist und nicht umgekehrt.<sup>12</sup>

Die vorherigen Auseinandersetzungen über Justin und Origenes sollten zeigen, daß für die frühchristlichen Autoren die Bibel nicht ein Buch war, das man neben die philosophischen Schriften legte, um zu erfahren, ob es vielleicht Übereinstimmungen gab zwischen diesen beiden. Die Bibel ist für sie Philosophie—ja, sogar der Inbegriff aller Philosophie. All das Wertvolle, das die von ihnen so hoch geschätzte Philosophie enthielt, muß daher für diese Denker in der Bibel zu finden sein. Dieser Gedanke ist letzten Endes die Erklärung der Tatsache, daß man soviel philosophisches Material in der Bibelexegese antrifft.

Hier muß noch bemerkt werden, daß die christlichen Autoren ein Beispiel in den Werken von Philo von Alexandrien hatten, dem in der griechischen Philosophie geschulten gläubigen Juden, der in der Zeit Christi die heiligen Bücher mit Hilfe der Theorien auslegte, die er in der griechischen Philosophie gelernt hatte. Philos Werk besteht hauptsächlich aus Kommentaren zu dem Teil der heiligen Bücher, der Thora heißt, die fünf Bücher, die das Gesetz von Moses, die Basis für das Leben des Juden, enthalten. Selbstredend unterscheidet er sich hierdurch von den christlichen Autoren, für welche das Schwergewicht in der Bibel irgendwo anders liegt. Weiterhin jedoch gibt es eine große Übereinstimmung:

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. I 14–15.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. IV 11; 21; 41 usw.

es ist für Philo selbstverständlich, daß die Bücher von Moses 'Philosophie' enthalten. Sie bieten ja die Normen für das Leben, sie bieten Lebensweisheit, und deshalb gehören sie zur philosophischen Literatur. Moses, der große Gesetzgeber der Juden, ist bis zum höchsten Gipfel der Philosophie gelangt.<sup>13</sup>

Man könnte die Frage erörtern, ob bei Philo die Theorie der Weisheit der alten Völker eine Rolle gespielt hat. Die Antwort auf diese Frage wäre wahrscheinlich, daß Philo, der sich als ein Mitglied des ältesten Volkes fühlte, seine heiligen Bücher selbstredend als die Quelle der Weisheit sah, wodurch die griechischen Schriften in den Schatten gestellt werden. Von einer bewußten Anwendung dieser Theorie, die wir bei den vorhergenannten Autoren antreffen, kann man bei Philo jedoch nicht sprechen.

### III. Die Exegese von ἐν ἀρχῇ in Genesis 1, 1

#### 1. Allgemeines<sup>13a</sup>

##### A. 'Αρχή in der griechischen Philosophie

Unsere Abhandlung will an Hand der Exegese des ersten Wortes des ersten Satzes der Bibel zeigen, wie sich diese Beurteilung des Verhältnisses zwischen Bibel und Philosophie auswirkt. Dieses Wort heißt ἐν ἀρχῇ. Um zu verstehen, warum diese auf den ersten Blick so einfache Zeitbestimmung eine große Anzahl Erklärungen hervorgerufen hat, ist es notwendig, etwas über den Begriff ἀρχή im griechischen Denken zu sagen. Von Anfang an haben die griechischen Philosophen sich mit dem Problem 'Vielheit—Einheit' befaßt. Immer wieder haben sie versucht, die Prinzipien oder—besser—das eine Prinzip (ἀρχή) zu entdecken, aus dem die verwirrende Vielheit der Dinge zu erklären ist.<sup>14</sup> Es besteht ein

<sup>13</sup> In *De opificio mundi* 1 vergleicht Philo Moses mit den anderen Gesetzgebern. Er lobt Moses, da er seine Gesetzgebung mit der Beschreibung der Schöpfung anfängt, mit der er seine Gesetze in den Rahmen des Welt-Gesetzes stellt. Vgl. c.8.

<sup>13a</sup> Vgl. 'In Principio'. Interpretations des premiers versets de la Genèse (Études Augustiniennes), Paris, 1973; Besprechung in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie* 54 (1974), 391–396 P. Prigent; und R. Joly, *Christianisme et Philosophie. Études sur Justin et les Apologues grecs du deuxième siècle*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> Siehe die ausgezeichnete Abhandlung von E. von Ivanka, *Hellenisches und Christliches im frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben*, Wien, 1948. Siehe auch A. Lumpe, *Der Terminus 'Prinzip' (ἀρχή) von den Vorsokratikern bis*

großer Abstand zwischen Thales, dem ersten griechischen Philosophen—wie man annimmt—und Plotin, der als letzter ein philosophisches System aufgebaut hat. Dennoch gibt es eine Übereinstimmung. Beide haben ein einziges Urprinzip: Thales findet es in einem körperlichen Prinzip, dem Wasser, Plotin in dem über alles Sein und Denken erhabenen 'Einen'. Mit diesem Namen ist der Gegenstand der gesamten griechischen Philosophie zutreffend bezeichnet. Zwischen Thales und Plotin haben alle griechischen Denker dasselbe gesucht. Viele schrieben ihre Überlegungen in einem Werk mit dem Titel 'περὶ φύσεως' nieder. Wenn man diese Überschrift mit 'Über die Natur' übersetzt, trifft man die Absicht des Verfassers nicht richtig. In diesen Büchern geht es nämlich um die Suche nach den Prinzipien und schließlich dem einen Prinzip, aus dem alles entstanden, 'gewachsen' (φύεσθαι) ist. Diese tragen den Namen ἀρχαί und ἀρχή.

#### B. Die christliche Aufnahme des Begriffes

Wenn der im griechischen Denken gebildete christliche Autor die Bibel aufschlägt, so fühlt er sich überrascht durch den Titel des ersten Buches: 'Genesis', d. h. Entstehung, Werden. Hier soll er also die endgültige Antwort auf das zentrale Problem der griechischen Philosophie finden. Wie viele griechische Denker 'περὶ φύσεως' geschrieben haben,<sup>15</sup> werden nun viele christliche Autoren Bücher schreiben, die das 'Hexaëmeron',<sup>16</sup> das Sechstageswerk

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auf Aristoteles, in: Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte I (1955), 104–116.

<sup>15</sup> Basilius, *In Hexaëmeron* I,2: Πολλὰ περὶ φύσεως ἐπραγματεύσαντο οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφοί.

<sup>16</sup> Wie schon von F.E. Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature: A study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis*, Chicago, 1912, S. 1, Anm. 2 bemerkt, ist dieser Ausdruck gewissermaßen unrichtig. Man müßte eigentlich 'die Hexaëmeros' schreiben, so wie K. Gronau, *Poseidonios und die jüdisch-christliche Genesis-Exegese*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1914. Es handelt sich nämlich um die ἐξαήμερος κοσμοποιία, dessen Substantivum wie ganz selbstverständlich fortgelassen ist. Man kann sich denken, daß, als der Titel von z. B. Basilius' Werk *Εἰς τὴν ἑξαήμερον* in der lateinischen Übersetzung 'In Hexaëmeron' übersetzt wurde, man das Genus und die Art dieses Wortes aus den Augen verlor und vom 'Hexaëmeron' als einem Neutrum die Rede war. Aber auch im Griechischen findet man später den sächlichen Gebrauch. So erwähnt Kosmas der Indienfahrer in seiner *Χριστιανικὴ τοπογραφία* (um 550) ein Werk *εἰς τὸ ἑξαήμερον* eines Bischofs Philon (P. G. 88, 433 D). Und der Titel eines Gedichtes von Georg dem Pisidier (um 625) lautet: *Ἐξαήμερον ἢ κοσμουργία* (P. G. 92, 1425). Als Einleitung zu diese Arbeit findet man bei Migne ein Monitum, in dem eine ausführliche Zusammenstellung der Hexaëmeronliteratur gegeben wird (Kol. 1383–1424). Vgl. Basile de Césarée,

aus der Schöpfungsgeschichte, behandeln. Selbstredend werden sie dabei immer wieder Beziehungen zu den Angaben der griechischen Philosophie finden, und das gilt schon unmittelbar vom allerersten Wort an: ἐν ἀρχῇ. Handelt es sich in der griechischen Philosophie nicht zu allererst um die ἀρχή?

Um nachzuempfinden, wie viele frühchristliche Denker diese ersten Worte der Bibel interpretierten, muß man dieses ἐν ἀρχῇ sehr stark betonen. Man kann etwa übersetzen: „Es ist eine ἀρχή gewesen, in der Gott Himmel und Erde schief.“ Dieses Wort ἀρχή nun wird mit den vielen Bedeutungen beladen, welche es in der griechischen Philosophie gibt.

## 2. Die Durchführung der Exegese

Als Grundtext für diese Untersuchung dient der erste Kommentar zum 'Hexaëmeron', der im ganzen erhalten ist, und zwar von Basilius dem Großen, der von 370 bis 379 Bischof von Caesarea in Kappadozien war. Dieser Kommentar war faktisch eine Serie von neun Predigten, in einer Woche der Fastenzeit gehalten, wahrscheinlich in dem letzten Jahre seines Lebens.<sup>17</sup> Dieses Werk machte besonders tiefen Eindruck und hatte großen Einfluß. Am deutlichsten ist dieser Einfluß bei Ambrosius, der einige Jahre später in Mailand Basilius sogar öfters fast wörtlich zitiert. Zirka 400 übersetzt ein gewisser Eustathius die 'Homilien' von Basilius in die lateinische Sprache. Dieser Einfluß in der lateinischen Welt ist sehr bemerkenswert. Jedoch auch in der griechischen Welt sind die Spuren eindeutig. Kurz nach dem Tode von Basilius schreibt sein jüngerer Bruder Gregorius von Nyssa ein 'In Hexaëmeron', jetzt jedoch nicht in Form von Predigten, sondern als theoretische Abhandlung, die klare Berührungspunkte mit Basilius' Werk aufweist. Und wenn man in späteren Zeiten die Kommentare der verschiedenen Autoren zur Bibel in den sogenannten

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Sur l'origine de l'homme, Hom. X et XI de l'Hexaéméron, Introduction, texte critique, trad. et notes par A. Smets et M. Van Esbroeck (Sources Chrétiennes 160), Paris, 1970. S. 94ff. und Auctorum Incertorum vulgo Basillii vel Gregorii Nysseni Sermones De creatione Hominis, ed. Hadwiga Hörner (Gregorii Nysseni Opera. Supplementum). Leiden 1972. Siehe jetzt auch J.C.M. van Winden, Art. 'Hexaëmeron', in *RAC* 14 (1988), kol. 1250–1269.

<sup>17</sup> J. Bernardi, La date de l'Hexaéméron de saint Basile, in: *Studia Patristica* III, Oxford, 1961 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristl. Literatur 78), S. 165–169, vgl. Basile de Césarée, Sur l'origine de l'homme (Sources Chrétiennes 160), S. 21, n. 2.

Kettenkommentaren sammelt, zeigt sich, daß Basilius noch einen großen Einfluß hat, wie z. B. bei Procopius von Gaza (um 625).

In der nachfolgenden Abhandlung ist, wie erwähnt, der Ausgangspunkt die erste vollständig überlieferte Erklärung der Genesisgeschichte, Basilius' 'In Hexaëmeron'. Man findet hier eine Interpretation von ἐν ἀρχῇ, welche als philosophisch bezeichnet werden kann. Über Gregorius kommen wir dann zur Bearbeitung von Basilius' Predigten durch Ambrosius, bei dem, neben vielem, das offenbar seinem Vorbild entnommen ist—und zwar oft auf eine Art und Weise, die Mangel an Einsicht in die Struktur von Basilius' Abhandlung verrät—, auch eine Interpretation gefunden wird, welcher man nicht bei Basilius begegnet, und zwar die sogenannte mystische. Diese ist keine Erfindung des Ambrosius, sondern im Gegenteil die älteste Interpretation des ersten Genesiswortes. Ihrer Geschichte wollen wir nachspüren. Schließlich werden wir zu dem Anfang der ersten Homilie von Basilius zurückkehren und versuchen, diesen schwierigen Text in neuem Licht erscheinen zu lassen.

#### A. Philosophische Interpretation

##### a) Basilius

In seiner ersten Homilie 'In Hexaëmeron' befaßt Basilius sich mit dem Text von Genesis 1, 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Nach einer Einleitung, welche großenteils der Gestalt des Autors, Moses, gewidmet ist (Kap. 1), spricht er im ersten Teil dieser Predigt vom Anfang jenes Textes, und zwar: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός (Kap. 2–7a); hier werden hintereinander die Begriffe θεός, ἀρχή und ποιεῖν betrachtet, wie dann im zweiten Teil οὐρανός und γῆ (Kap. 7b–11).

Die Interpretation von ἐν ἀρχῇ umfaßt das größte Stück des ersten Teiles (Kap. 3–6), in dem man wiederum zwei Teile unterscheiden kann. Im ersten gibt Basilius an, welche Ansicht über den Ursprung der Welt durch jenes Wort von 'Genesis' abgewiesen wird, nämlich daß sie ohne Anfang wäre: im zweiten legt er dar, welche Bedeutungen das Wort ἀρχή hier haben kann.

##### α) „Nicht ohne Anfang“

Wenn Moses behauptet, daß Gott Himmel und Erde ἐν ἀρχῇ geschaffen hat, so müsse man, wie Basilius sagt, zu allererst folgern,

daß die Welt nicht ohne Anfang ist.<sup>18</sup> Er berührt hier einen fundamentalen Punkt in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Christentum und griechischer Philosophie. Letztere lehrte im allgemeinen ein ewiges Dasein der Welt oder der Materie, aus der sie entstanden oder gebildet worden ist.<sup>19</sup> Genesis 1, 1 jedoch verkündet deutlich, daß die Welt einen Anfang gehabt hat. Aus dieser Tatsache heraus schließt Basilius, daß von einer Welt, die ewig wäre wie Gott, oder von einer Welt, die selber Gott wäre, wie die griechischen Denker das lehren, keine Rede sein kann.<sup>20</sup>

## β Die Bedeutungen von ἀρχή

### αα) 'Αρχή in der Zeit

negativ: οὐ κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν

Daß die Welt tatsächlich einen Anfang gehabt hat, zeigt sich auch in den Texten der Bibel, in denen vom Ende der Welt die Rede ist, wie zum Beispiel I Kor. 7, 31: „Die Gestalt dieser Welt vergeht“, und Matth. 24, 35: „Himmel und Erde vergehen.“ Im ἐν ἀρχῇ von Genesis 1, 1 kann man eine Ankündigung (προαναφώνησις) der Lehre über das Ende aller Dinge sehen. Denn „was in der Zeit begonnen hat, muß auch in der Zeit vergehen. Wenn es einen

<sup>18</sup> In Hex. 9A: Μὴ οὖν ἀναρχα φαντάζου, ἄνθρωπε, τὰ ὁρώμενα. Vgl. 8C: 'Αρχὴν πρῶτον ἐπέθηκεν, ἵνα μὴ ἀναρχον αὐτὸν οἰηθῶσί τινες.

<sup>19</sup> Siehe das meisterhafte Werk von J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Ambroise, Exam. I,1 1–4), Paris, P.U.F., 1964, S. 53ff.

<sup>20</sup> In Hex. 12A: 'Αλλὰ τοσοῦτον ἐματαιώθησαν ..., ὥστε οἱ μὲν συνυπάρχειν ἐξ αἰδίου τῷ θεῷ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀπεφάναντο, οἱ δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναι θεὸν ἀναρχόν τε καὶ ἀτελεύτητον καὶ τῆς τῶν κατὰ μέρος οἰκονομίας αἰτίον. (Soweit trieben sie die Eitelkeit in ihren Gedanken ..., dass die einen es offen aussprachen, der Himmel existiere von Ewigkeit her mit Gott, und die anderen erklärten, der Himmel sei Gott, ohne Anfang und ohne Ende, und die Ursache für die Gestaltung der Einzeldinge. Übers. B.K.V.).

Der οὐρανός, von dem Basilius hier spricht, ist das Äquivalent von κόσμος; vgl. J. Pépin, *Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression Caelum Caeli dans le livre XII des Confessions de S. Augustin*, in: *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 23 (1953), S. 231, Anm. 2. Vgl. Procopius, *Commentarii in Genesim prooimium* (P. G. 87, 1, 29A): 'Επειδὴ δὲ γένεσις ἡμῖν τὸ προκείμενον, ἰστέον ὅτι τῶν Ἑλλήνων παῖδες συναΐδιον τῷ θεῷ τὴν κτίσιν εἶναι φασί. ὕλην γάρ τινα τῷ θεῷ συναΐδιον ὑποτίθενται. (Da wir über Genesis (Entstehung) handeln, soll man wissen, dass griechische Denker behaupten, dass die Schöpfung ewig ist mit Gott. Sie nehmen nämlich eine Materie an die ewig ist wie Gott. Übers. B.K.V.). Siehe für eine Übersicht der Diskussionen zwischen griechischen Philosophen über dieses Problem: J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, Paris, 1964, Kap. IV, 'La durée du monde', S. 79ff.

zeitlichen Anfang hat, dann zweifle nicht an seinem Ende“,<sup>21</sup> so spricht Basilius, der hier deutlich der seit Aristoteles fast allgemein akzeptierten Lehre beipflichtet, daß alles, was einen Anfang hat, auch ein Ende hat und umgekehrt, daß alles, was ohne Anfang, auch ohne Ende ist.<sup>22</sup>

Unversehens hat Basilius in seine Erörterung den Begriff ‘Zeit’ eingeführt, indem er über Dinge spricht, die ‘in der Zeit’ anfangen und enden. Wenn die ‘Genesis’ über ἀρχή redet, so meint sie den Anfang dessen, was in der Zeit besteht, d. h. diese sinnfällige Welt.

Es war nämlich, so erwähnt Basilius, vor dieser unserer Welt, schon etwas erschaffen, d. h. eine Welt, welche nur mit dem Denken zu erreichen ist und welche Moses unbesprochen gelassen hat, da er sich an Menschen wandte, die geistig noch in der Erkenntnis (γνώσις) unmündig waren. Diese Welt, welche auch von Gott erschaffen worden ist, wird von Basilius folgendermaßen beschrieben: da ist zu allererst „eine geistiges Licht, entsprechend der Seligkeit derer, die den Herrn lieben“, und weiterhin gibt es die „unsichtbaren geistigen Naturen sowie die ganze Ordnung der geistigen Dinge, was alles unser Erkennen übersteigt“.<sup>23</sup>

Basilius stellt sich offenbar eine Welt nach dem Muster unserer Welt vor. Ebenso wie hier ist dort ein Licht, in dem die dort befindlichen Wesen leben: jedoch ist in ihr alles geistig, νοητόν. Wie die sinnfällige Welt mit dem Ausdruck “Ordnung der sichtbaren Dingen” (διακόσμησις τῶν ὁρωμένων) (4A) bezeichnet wird, so diese geistige Welt mit “Ordnung der geistigen Dingen” (διακόσμησις τῶν νοητῶν) (13A).

Selbstverständlich ruft diese noetische Welt Assoziationen mit Platos Ideenwelt hervor, aber jedem wird klar sein, daß es sich hier um eine Vorstellung von Dingen handelt, die mit den von Plato gemeinten nicht viel gemeinsam haben. Die exemplarische Ideenwelt ist zu einem Aufenthaltsort für geistige Wesen, zum ‘Himmel’,<sup>24</sup> geworden.

<sup>21</sup> In Hex. 9C: Τὰ ἀπὸ χρόνου ἀρξάμενα πάντα ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ συντελεσθῆναι. Εἰ ἀρχὴν ἔχει χρονικὴν, μὴ ἀμφιβάλῃς περὶ τοῦ τέλους.

<sup>22</sup> Siehe J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique*, S. 81ff.

<sup>23</sup> In Hex. 13A: Δημιουργήματα δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ ὁ τῶν ὅλων κτίστης καὶ δημιουργὸς ἀπετέλεσε, φῶς νοητὸν πρέπον τῇ μακαριότητι τῶν φιλοῦντων τὸν κύριον, τὰς λογικὰς καὶ ἀοράτους φύσεις, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν τῶν νοητῶν διακόσμησιν, ὅσα τὴν ἡμετέραν διάνοιαν ὑπερβαίνει.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. D.L. Balás, *ΜΕΤΟΥΣΙΑ ΘΕΟΥ*, Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Rom, 1966, S. 35.

Nachdem Basilius die geistige Welt beschrieben hat und als Beweis für die Erschaffung dieser unkörperlichen Realität den Text des Paulus an die Kolosser I, 16 („In Ihm ist alles erschaffen, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare“) angeführt hat, fährt er folgendermaßen fort: „Und als noch diese Welt zum Bestehenden hinzugefügt werden mußte, vornehmlich als eine Lehrstätte und Unterrichtsort für die Menschenseelen und weiterhin auch überhaupt als ein geeigneter Aufenthalt für alles, was entsteht und vergeht, kam der Lauf der Zeit zustande; sie ist nämlich naturgemäß darin mit der Welt und den lebenden Wesen und Pflanzen verbunden, daß sie immer forteilt und vorbeiströmt und nie ihren Lauf unterbricht. Oder ist es mit der Zeit nicht so, daß ihre Vergangenheit verschwunden, ihre Zukunft noch nicht da ist und die Gegenwart den Sinnen enteilt, ehe man sie recht gewahr wird? Wohlan, so ist auch die Natur alles Werdenden; sie ist ganz und gar Wachstum oder vergeht, aber sie hat offenbar weder Bestand noch Dauer. Und deswegen lag der Gedanke nahe, daß die Körper der lebenden Wesen und Pflanzen, welche notwendig gleichsam an eine Strömung gefesselt werden und einer Bewegung unterworfen sind, die zum Werden und Vergehen forttreibt, von der Zeit umfassen werden, da diese eine Eigentümlichkeit hat, die dem Wandelbaren verwandt ist.“<sup>25</sup>

Jetzt erst ist das Element 'Zeit', das oben heimlich in die Darstellung eingeführt wurde, harmonisch zur Diskussion gestellt.

<sup>25</sup> *In Hex.* 13B–C: ὅτε δὲ ἔδει λοιπὸν καὶ τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἐπεισαχθῆναι τοῖς οὔσι, προηγουμένως μὲν διδασκαλεῖον καὶ παιδευτήριον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν, ἔπειτα μέντοι καὶ ἀπαξ ἀπλῶς πάντων τῶν ἐν γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ ἐπιτήδειον ἐνδιαίτημα, συμφυῆς ἄρα τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ ζώοις τε καὶ φυτοῖς, ἢ τοῦ χρόνου διέξοδος ὑπέστη, ἐπειγομένη αἰεὶ καὶ παραρρέουσα, καὶ μηδαμῶς παυομένη τοῦ δρόμου. "Ἡ οὐχὶ τοιοῦτος ὁ χρόνος, οὗ τὸ μὲν παρελθὸν ἠφανίσθη, τὸ δὲ μέλλον οὐπω πάρεστι, τὸ δὲ παρὸν πρὶν γνωσθῆναι διαδιδράσκει τὴν αἴσθησιν; Τοιαύτη δὲ τις καὶ τῶν γινομένων ἢ φύσις, ἢ αὐξανομένη πάντως, ἢ φθίνουσα, τὸ δὲ ἰδρυμένον καὶ στάσιμον οὐκ ἐπίδηλον ἔχουσα. "Ἐπεπεν οὖν τοῖς ζώων τε καὶ φυτῶν σώμασιν, οἷονεὶ ῥεύματι τινι πρὸς ἀνάγκην ἐνδεδεμένοις, καὶ τῇ πρὸς γένεσιν ἢ φθορὰν ἀγούσῃ κινήσει συνεχομένοις, ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ χρόνου φύσεως περιέχεσθαι, συγγενῇ τοῖς ἀλλοιούμενοις κεκτημένου τὴν ιδιότητα. (Die Übersetzung des Basilius Textes ist, sowohl hier wie anderswo in diesem Artikel, der von A. Stegmann in 'Bibliothek der Kirchenväter' [München, 1925] entnommen, soweit ich dem Verfasser zustimmen kann.)

Die Interpunktion dieser Passage in Migne, namentlich jene des ersten Teiles, welche von Giet in den 'Sources Chrétiennes' übernommen worden ist, ist unrichtig. Es wird übersehen, daß συμφυῆς ἄρα ... ἢ τοῦ χρόνου διέξοδος ὑπέστη der Hauptsatz der Periode ist, die mit ὅτε δὲ ἔδει anfängt. In der Übersetzung von Giet kommt nicht zum Ausdruck, daß es sich hier um die Entstehung des Laufes der Zeit handelt; mit anderen Worten, ὑπέστη ist nicht übersetzt.

Übrigens ist es fesselnd, zu beobachten, wie Basilius jene aus der griechischen Philosophie bekannte These, daß Welt und Zeit wesentlich zueinander gehören, auf eine anschauliche Art und Weise seiner Zuhörerschaft verdeutlicht. Die sich stets bewegende Welt wird 'von der Zeit umfassen' und ist somit 'in der Zeit' gesetzt. Der 'Lauf der Zeit' und die Bewegung der Welt werden hier als zwei separate Realitäten dargestellt und in ein Verhältnis zueinander gebracht.

Als Folgerung aus diesem ersten Paragraphen über die Bedeutung von ἀρχή in Genesis 1, 1, sagt Basilius, daß hier die Rede von einem Anfang in der Zeit ist. „Denn wenn Moses sagt, daß die Welt 'im Anfang' geworden sei, will er damit nicht behaupten, daß sie die Erstgeborene ist von allem, was entstanden ist, er erzählt jedoch den Anfang der Existenz dieser sichtbaren wahrnehmbaren Welt, <die geschaffen ist> nach der unsichtbaren noetischen.“ Kurz formuliert, es ist eine ἀρχή κατὰ χρόνον, οὐ κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν.<sup>26</sup>

#### Vier Bedeutungen von ἀρχή κατὰ χρόνον

Basilius fährt in seiner Erörterung mit einer Auseinandersetzung fort, bei der sich erst allmählich herausstellt, wie der Zusammenhang mit dem Vorherigen ist. Er führt nämlich vier Bedeutungen von ἀρχή auf, welche er jedesmal mittels eines Textes oder eines Hinweises auf die Bibel erläutert. (Basilius illustriert so auf treffende Art und Weise die These, die wir oben über das Verhältnis zwischen Bibel und Philosophie entfalteten. Die Bibel ist die Quelle der Philosophie, und von der Bibel aus wird nun auch der philosophische Begriff ἀρχή erläutert.<sup>27</sup>)

<sup>26</sup> In Hex. 13C: 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν· τουτέστιν, ἐν ἀρχῇ ταύτῃ τῇ κατὰ χρόνον. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν πάντων τῶν γενομένων προέχειν αὐτὸν μαρτυρῶν λέγει ἐν ἀρχῇ γεγονέναι, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὰ ἀόρατα καὶ νοούμενα τῶν ὁρατῶν τούτων καὶ αἰσθήσει ληπτῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑπάρξεως διηγείται. (Im Anfang schuf er, d.h. in jenem Anfange der Zeit. Nicht um das höhere Alter der Welt allen gewordenen Dingen gegenüber zu bezeugen, sagt er, sie sei im Anfange geworden, sondern er erzählt, diese sichtbaren und sinnfälligen Dinge hätten nach den unsichtbaren und geistigen zu existieren angefangen. Übers. B.K.V.).

<sup>27</sup> Eine Darlegung ähnlichen Aufbaues findet man schon dort bei Origenes, wo er die ersten Worte des Johannesevangeliums, ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, auslegt. Er gibt da eine Aufzählung zahlreicher Bedeutungen von ἀρχή, worauf er die Frage stellt, welche dieser Bedeutungen auf Johannes 1, 1 zutreffen (Τοσούτων σημαινόμενων ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἡμῖν ὑποπεσόντων περὶ ἀρχῆς, ζητοῦμεν ἐπὶ τίνος δεῖ λαμβάνειν τὸ "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος", In Joh. I, 22). In der Einleitung zu

Danach setzt Basilius auseinander, wie all diese Bedeutungen von ἀρχή bei Genesis 1, 1 anwendbar sind. Im Laufe der Erörterung zeigt sich, daß diese 4 Bedeutungen von ἀρχή eine Art Untergliederung bilden von ἀρχή κατὰ χρόνον. Wie er zu dieser Auseinandersetzung kommt, wird verständlich, wenn wir die Quelle dieser Einteilung in vier ἀρχαί nachspüren.

Untenstehend geben wir erst den Text von Basilius (16A–C), von dem anschließend eine paraphrasierende Erklärung gegeben wird; danach kommt dann eine Untersuchung der Hintergründe.

(1) Λέγεται μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ πρώτη κίνησις· ὥς, “Ἀρχὴ ὁδοῦ ἀγαθῆς τὸ ποιεῖν δίκαια.” Ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν δικαίων πράξεων πρῶτον κινούμεθα πρὸς τὸν μακάριον βίον.

(2) Λέγεται δὲ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὅθεν γίνεται τι τοῦ ἐνυπάρχοντος αὐτῷ, ὥς ἐπὶ οἰκίας θεμέλιος καὶ ἐπὶ πλοίου ἡ τρόπις, καθὼ εἴρηται, “Ἀρχὴ σοφίας, φόβος Κυρίου.” Οἶον γὰρ κρηπίς καὶ βάθρον πρὸς τὴν τελείωσιν ἡ εὐλάβεια.

(3) Ἀρχὴ δὲ καὶ τῶν τεχνικῶν ἔργων ἡ τέχνη· ὥς ἡ σοφία Βεσελεὴλ τοῦ περὶ τὴν σκηνὴν κόσμου.

(4) Ἀρχὴ δὲ πράξεων πολλάκις καὶ τὸ εὐχρηστον τέλος τῶν γινομένων· ὥς τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης ἡ παρὰ Θεοῦ ἀποδοχὴ, καὶ πάσης τῆς κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἐνεργείας τὸ ἐν ἐπαγγελίαις ἀποκείμενον τέλος.

Τοσαυταχῶς οὖν λεγομένης τῆς ἀρχῆς, σκόπει εἰ μὴ πᾶσι τοῖς σηματομένοις ἡ παροῦσα φωνὴ ἐφαρμόσει. Καὶ γὰρ ἀφ’ οὗ χρόνου ἤρξατο ἡ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου σύστασις, δυνατόν σοι μαθεῖν, ἐάν γε ἐκ τοῦ παρόντος εἰς τὸ κατόπιν ἀναποδίζων, φιλονεικῆσης εὐρεῖν τὴν πρώτην ἡμέραν τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως. Εὐρήσεις γὰρ οὕτως,

(1) πόθεν τῷ χρόνῳ ἡ πρώτη κίνησις,

(2) ἔπειτα, ὅτι καὶ οἰονεὶ θεμέλιοί τινες καὶ κρηπίδες προκατεβλήθησαν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ,

(3) εἶτα, ὅτι ἐστὶ τις τεχνικὸς λόγος ὁ καθηγησάμενος τῆς τῶν ὁρωμένων διακοσμήσεως, ὥς ἐνδείκνυται σοὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς,

(4) καὶ τὸ μὴ εἰκῆ μηδὲ μάτην, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τι τέλος ὠφέλιμον καὶ

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dieser Ausführung stellt Origenes nachdrücklich fest, daß nicht nur bei den Griechen (den Philosophen) der Ausdruck ἀρχή viele Bedeutungen hat, sondern daß man dieser Tatsache auch in der Heiligen Schrift begegnet. Οὐ μόνον Ἕλληνες πολλὰ φασὶ σημαίνοντα εἶναι ἀπὸ τῆς “ἀρχῆς” προσηγορίας· ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἴ τις τηρήσῃ συνάγων πάντοθεν τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάζων βούλοιο κατανοεῖν ἐν ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ τῶν γραφῶν ἐπὶ τίνος τέτακται, εὐρήσει καὶ κατὰ τὸν θεῖον λόγον τὸ πολύσημον τῆς φωνῆς.

μεγάλην χρεῖαν τοῖς οὔσι συνεισφερόμενον ἐπινενοῆσθαι τὸν κόσμον, εἶπερ τῷ ὄντι ψυχῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλεῖον καὶ θεογνωσίας ἐστὶ παιδευτήριον, διὰ τῶν ὁρωμένων καὶ αἰσθητῶν χειραγωγίαν τῷ νῷ παρεχόμενος πρὸς τὴν θεωρίαν τῶν ἀοράτων.

Basilius stellt hier fest, daß ἀρχή erstens (καὶ) die Bedeutung einer 'ersten Bewegung' hat, wie in Prov. 16, 7. „Der Anfang eines guten Lebenswandels ist Gerechtigkeit zu üben.“ Gerechte Handlungen sind ja bekanntlich der erste Anlauf (= Bewegung) zu dem glückseligen Leben.

Ἀρχή hat auch die Bedeutung dessen, woraus etwas einen Anfang nimmt, während es selber darin anwesend bleibt, wie das der Fall ist mit dem Fundament eines Hauses oder dem Kiel eines Schiffes. In diesem Sinne sagt Prov. 1, 7: „Die Furcht des Herren ist der Anfang der Weisheit.“ Die Ehrfurcht vor Gott ist ja gleichsam das Fundament zur Vollkommenheit.

Ἀρχή hat weiterhin die Bedeutung von Geschicklichkeit, nämlich wenn es sich um Werke von Handwerksleuten handelt. So war die Weisheit (= Geschicklichkeit) Besaleels die ἀρχή der Ausschmückung der Hütte (vgl. Exodus 31, 3).

Ἀρχή hat schließlich oft die Bedeutung des nützlichen Zieles, das man vor Augen hat. So ist bei einer Almosenspende die Huld Gottes das Ziel und bei jeder tugendhaften Tat dasjenige, was in den Verheißungen enthalten ist. (Mit Verheißungen werden hier u. a. die Seligpreisungen gemeint sowie μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, Matth. 5, 7).

Dies nun sind die mannigfachen Bedeutungen von ἀρχή, fährt Basilius fort, und untersucht nun, ob der betreffende Text von 'Genesis' diese ganzen Bedeutungen zuläßt.

„Wohlan, den Zeitpunkt, als die Welt anfang zu bestehen, kann man erfahren, wenn man, von der Gegenwart auf die Vergangenheit zurückgehend, den ersten Tag des Weltursprungs zu finden versucht.“ (In diesem Satz liegt die Betonung auf ὅφ' οὗ χρόνου, und man sollte diesen ersten Ausspruch im Zusammenhang mit der vorhergehenden Passage sehen, wo Basilius betont, daß es sich in Genesis 1, 1 um einen 'Anfang in der Zeit' handelt.)

Gerade wie vorher dieser 'Anfang in der Zeit' in vier Bedeutungen auseinanderfiel, so auch hier: Basilius fährt nämlich folgendermaßen fort: „Man wird dann ja finden

1. wo die erste Bewegung der Zeit begann;
2. daß Himmel und Erde als Fundamente und Grundlagen gegründet wurden;
3. weiterhin, daß es eine gewisse künstlerische Vernunft war, welche die Führung gehabt hat bei der Ordnung der sichtbaren Welt, so wie das Wort ἀρχή es uns schon klarmacht;
4. daß die Welt nicht plan- und sinnlos erdacht worden ist, sondern zu einem nützlichen Zweck und allen Wesen zum großen Nutzen. Sie ist nämlich die Schule der vernünftigen Seelen und eine Erziehungsanstalt zur Gotteserkenntnis; durch das Sinnfällige führt sie unseren Geist, und zwar zur Betrachtung des Unsichtbaren.“ (Demselben Gedanken begegneten wir schon in oben zitiertem Text, 13B.)

Eine Frage, die sich bei dieser Darlegung des Basilius sofort aufdrängt, ist, wie er zu diesen vierfachen Bedeutungen von ἀρχή kommt. Über die endgültige Quelle kann es kaum einen Zweifel geben. Man muß im Hintergrund die bekannten vier αἷτια, die Aristoteles bei allem Werden unterscheidet, sehen. Daß Basilius von ἀρχαί und Aristoteles von αἷτια spricht, ist kein Argument gegen dies These, wenn man bei Aristoteles am Ende einer Aufzählung der Bedeutungen von ἀρχαί liest: ἰσαχῶς δὲ καὶ τὰ αἷτια λέγεται. πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἷτια ἀρχαί. πασῶν μὲν οὖν κοινὸν τῶν ἀρχῶν τὸ πρῶτον εἶναι ὅθεν ἢ ἔστι ἢ γίνεται ἢ γινώσκεται (*Met.* 1013 a 16ff.).

Es gibt jedoch Unterschiede zwischen Aristoteles' und Basilius' Aufzählung, deren Grund später in dieser Abhandlung angegeben wird. Betrachten wir zunächst die Texte von Aristoteles. In *Met.* 983 a 26ff. sagt er:

- τὰ δ' αἷτια λέγεται τετραχῶς,
- (1) ὦν μίαν μὲν αἷτιαν φαμὲν εἶναι τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ...
  - (2) ἑτέραν δὲ τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον,
  - (3) τρίτην δὲ ὅθεν ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως,
  - (4) τετάρτην δὲ τὴν ἀντικειμένην αἷτιαν ταύτῃ, τὸ οὐδ' ἕνεκα καὶ τὰ γα-  
θόν (τέλος γὰρ γενέσεως καὶ κινήσεως πάσης τοῦτ' ἐστίν.)

In *Met.* 1013 a 24ff. gibt er eine Aufzählung, bei der die Reihenfolge der ersten zwei Bedeutungen umgekehrt ist. Diesem Text begegnet man auch in *Phys.* 194 b 23ff.:

- (=2) Αἴτιον λέγεται ἓνα μὲν τρόπον ἐξ οὗ γίνεται τι ἐνυπάρχοντος, οἷον ὁ χαλκὸς τοῦ ἀνδριάντος καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος τῆς φιάλης καὶ τὰ τούτων γένη·
- (=1) ἄλλον δὲ τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα, τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ τὰ τούτου γένη ...
- (3) ἔτι ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἡ πρώτη ἢ τῆς ἡρεμήσεως, οἷον ὁ βουλευσας αἴτιος, καὶ ὁ πατήρ τοῦ τέκνου καὶ ὅλως τὸ ποιοῦν τοῦ ποιουμένου ...
- (4) ἔτι ὡς τὸ τέλος· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, οἷον τοῦ περιπατεῖν ἡ ὑγίεια.

Von den vier Ursachen, die Aristoteles hier nennt, sind die ersten zwei die internen (Materie und Form), die letzten zwei die externen (Bewegungs- und Zweckursache). Wie schon erwähnt, unterscheidet Aristoteles diese vier Ursachen bei jedem Entstehen. Nun stellte sich oben heraus, daß Basilius vier Bedeutungen von ἀρχή unterscheidet bei 'Anfang in der Zeit', d. h. bei dem Werdegang dieser Welt. Betrachtet man weiterhin die Formulierungen der beiden Autoren, so fallen sofort die Übereinstimmungen auf. Untenstehend folgen sie in einer kurzen Synopse in der Reihenfolge von Basilius:

Basilius	Aristoteles
(1) ἡ πρώτη κίνησις	ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως
(2) ὅθεν γίνεται τί τοῦ ἐνυπάρχοντος αὐτῷ	ἐξ οὗ γίνεται τι ἐνυπάρχοντος
(3) (τεχνικὸς) λόγος	ὁ λόγος
(4) τὸ (εὐχρηστον) τέλος	τὸ τέλος

Die Übereinstimmungen in der Formulierung bestätigen Basilius' Abhängigkeit von Aristoteles.

Dies verhindert jedoch nicht, daß sich hinter diesen übereinstimmenden Formulierungen bei Basilius ein ganz anderer Inhalt verbirgt. Wenn Aristoteles über ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως spricht, meint er 'das Prinzip der Bewegung', nicht 'den Anfang der Bewegung' oder 'die erste Bewegung', während Basilius' Formulierung nur diese letztere Bedeutung hat. Aristoteles deutet weiterhin mit ἐξ οὗ γίνεται τι die Materie an, aus der etwas gebildet ist, während Basilius seinen Beispielen zufolge die Basis, das Fundament von etwas im Auge hat. Wenn Aristoteles ferner von dem λόγος als Ursache spricht, so meint er die Form (εἶδος), welche in den Dingen

ist, während Basilius den λόγος τεχνικός des Schöpfers im Auge hat. Schließlich: das τέλος ist bei Aristoteles dasjenige, worauf etwas in sich selbst gerichtet ist, während bei Basilius von einem Ziel, das von dem Schöpfer gestellt worden ist, die Rede ist (siehe 16C: ἐπινενοῆσθαι).

Die Unterschiede haben ihre Ursache darin, daß bei Aristoteles die vier αἷτια tatsächlich die Ursachen der Dinge sind, während dies bei Basilius nicht der Fall ist. Bei ihm ist Gott die endgültige Ursache von allem; die vier ἀρχαί haben bei ihm eine viel weniger fundamentale Bedeutung, und er könnte sie auch keine αἷτια nennen. Der Unterschied offenbart sich besonders bei den ersten zwei von ihm genannten ἀρχαί: da kommt 'erste Bewegung' an stelle von 'Prinzip der Bewegung' und 'Fundament' an Stelle von 'Materie'.

Gerade für diese zwei Bedeutungen von ἀρχή fand Basilius anderswo in Aristoteles' Werk den erforderlichen Hinweis. Wenn nämlich in *Met.* 1012 b 34ff. die Bedeutungen von ἀρχή aufgezählt werden, nennt er als die ersten beiden folgende:

Ἀρχὴ λέγεται ἡ μὲν ὅθεν ἂν τις τοῦ πράγματος κινηθεῖν πρῶτον, οἷον τοῦ μήκους καὶ ὁδοῦ, ἐντεῦθεν μὲν αὕτη ἀρχή, ἐξ ἐναντίας δὲ ἑτέρα· ... ἡ δὲ ὅθεν πρῶτον γίγνεται ἐνυπάρχοντος, οἷον ὡς πλοίου τρόπις καὶ οἰκίας θεμέλιος.

In der ersten Umschreibung erkennt man leicht die 'erste Bewegung', während beim Beispiel des Weges eine Übereinstimmung zwischen Basilius und Aristoteles existiert. Im zweiten Fall sind sowohl Umschreibung wie Beispiele identisch.

Diese Passage bietet ein glänzendes Beispiel für das, was man in der patristischen Literatur oft findet. Der Text sieht aus, als ob der Autor ohne weiteres aus seinem philosophischen Arsenal geschöpft hat und diese Philosophica ohne viel Einsicht in seine Erörterung aufgenommen hat. Indem man von dieser unausgesprochenen Voraussetzung ausging, verwandte man diese Texte oft als Fundgrube für Doxographica der klassischen Philosophie, ohne sich um die Erörterung des Autors zu kümmern. Man nahm diese philosophischen Texte heraus wie eine Art *Corpus extraneum*.<sup>28</sup> Faktisch jedoch hat man es oft mit einer Bearbeitung

<sup>28</sup> Ein Beispiel dieser Art von Bearbeitung findet man, gerade aus der betreffenden Homilie von Basilius, in: K. Gronau, Poseidonios und die jüdisch-christliche Genesis-Exegese, Leipzig-Berlin, 1914, S. 35ff.

philosophischen Materials zu tun, so daß dies einen eigenen Inhalt und eine eigene Funktion in der Erörterung bekommt. Auch wenn die Bearbeitung nicht selten oberflächlich erscheint, hat der Autor doch ein Anrecht auf die Analyse seines eigenen Gedankenganges. Nur so kann man zu einer richtigen Interpretation seiner Worte kommen.<sup>29</sup>

Es wäre vielleicht nützlich, nochmal näher zu betrachten, wie Basilius die vier Bedeutungen von ἀρχή auf Genesis 1, 1 verwendet. Man kann dabei am besten eine Übersetzung des Genesis-textes, wie oben genannt voraussetzen: „Es hat einen Anfang gegeben, in dem Gott Himmel und Erde schuf“, oder „Gott gab dem Himmel und der Erde einen Anfang“, und zwar:

1. die erste Bewegung
2. ein Ziel (das wurde als vierte ἀρχή genannt)
3. weiterhin wandte Gott seine τέχνη, oder aber seinen τεχνικὸς λόγος an und gab in diesem Sinne auch wieder der Welt eine ἀρχή.—Als eine Erklärung fügt Basilius hier noch hinzu: ὡς ἐνδείκνυται σοι ἡ φωνὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς. Eine merkwürdige Erklärung, die offenbar von der Voraussetzung ausgeht, daß für die Zuhörer die Begriffe λόγος und ἀρχή sehr verwandt sind. Man kann hier an Joh. 1, 1 denken: ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, was, wie sich später herausstellen wird, auch als ἀρχὴ ἦν ὁ λόγος (siehe unten) gelesen werden kann. Man kann auch denken an einen Ausspruch von Theophilus von Antiochien, der, von Gott redend, sagte: εἰ λόγον εἶπω, ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ λέγω, Wenn ich von (Gottes) Logos spreche, spreche ich von seiner *archè* (Ad Autol. I, 3).
4. Bei der Bedeutung 'Fundament' ist es komplizierter. Gott gibt nämlich Himmel und Erde kein Fundament, sondern Himmel und Erde sind die Fundamente. Man müßte somit Genesis 1, 1 eigentlich folgendermaßen übersetzen: „Als einen Anfang schuf Gott Himmel und Erde“, als ob im Griechischen stände: „Ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.“ Daß man den Text von Genesis 1, 1 tatsächlich so lesen könnte, wird in der Exegese des Acacius von Caesarea (†366) bestätigt, von der einzelne Fragmente überliefert sind. In einem dieser Fragmente sagt er, daß man ἐν ἀρχῇ in Genesis

<sup>29</sup> Siehe auch J.C.M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher, Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*, chapters one to nine, Leiden, Brill, 1971, besonders S. 59ff.

1, 1 interpretieren müsse als Äquivalent von ἐν πρώτοις, oder aber von ἀρχήν. Und er beweist dann aus der Bibel, daß ἐν ἀρχῇ und ἀρχήν dieselbe Bedeutung haben. Er führt dabei erst Prov. 8, 22–23 an, wo nacheinander von der Weisheit gesagt wird, daß sie ἀρχή sei und ἐν ἀρχῇ. (Der Text lautet: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέν με ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι). Weiterhin verweist er darauf, daß von Christus gesagt wird, er sei ἀρχή (Kol. 1, 18) und ἐν ἀρχῇ (Joh. 1, 1). So kann der Ausspruch, daß Himmel und Erde 'im Anfang' geschaffen worden sind, so aufgefaßt werden, daß Himmel und Erde 'der Anfang' von allem, was geschaffen worden ist und worüber der Gesetzgeber Moses auch schreiben wollte, sind.<sup>30</sup>

### ββ) Zeitloser Anfang

Auf diese ausführliche Darlegung über den 'Anfang in der Zeit' läßt Basilius folgende Betrachtung folgen: „Oder vielleicht steht dort ‚im Anfang schuf er‘ wegen des sehr kurzen, ja zeitlosen Momentes der Schöpfung, denn Anfang ist etwas Unteilbares, etwas ohne Dimension und Größe. Wie der Anfang eines Weges noch nicht der Weg ist und der Anfang eines Hauses noch kein Haus ist, so ist auch der Anfang der Zeit noch nicht die Zeit selbst, ja nicht einmal ein kleinster Teil von ihr. Sollte jemand das

<sup>30</sup> Τὸ “ἐν ἀρχῇ” οὕτως ἀκουστέον ὥσει ἔφασκεν ἦτοι “Ἐν πρώτοις ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν” ἢ “Ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανόν”, δηλονότι τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα κτισθέντων. “Ὅτι δὲ ὁμοίον ἐστίν, μᾶλλον δὲ ταυτόν, τὸ “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν” τῷ “ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν” σαφὲς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς σοφίας ἀμφοτέρω ἀνωμάσθαι. εἰρημένον γὰρ ἐν Παροιμίαις “Κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ” ἐπηνέχθη τὸ “ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι”. “Ὡςπερ οὖν ὁ Χριστὸς “ἀρχή” τῶν πάντων καὶ “ἐν ἀρχῇ” εἶναι εἴρηται, οὕτως εἴποις ἂν ὅτι καὶ οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ “ἐν ἀρχῇ” ἔκτισται, εἰρημένα ἀρχὴ ὑπάρχειν τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα γεγεννημένων καὶ δεδημιουργημένων, περὶ ὧν καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις ἦν ἀναγράψαι τῷ νομοθέτῃ. (Die Worte “Im Anfang” soll man so verstehen als sage er: entweder “als erste schuf Gott den Himmel und die Erde”, oder “als Anfang schuf Gott den Himmel”, das heißt (als Anfang) der danach geschaffenen Dinge. Daß die Aussagen “Im Anfang schuf er” und “Als Anfang schuf er” von gleicher Bedeutung, ja sogar identisch sind, ist offensichtlich, da beide auch von der Weisheit aus gesagt werden. Im Buch der Sprüche wird zunächst gesagt “Der Herr schuf mich als Anfang seiner Wege”, und dann “im Anfang schuf er mich, bevor er die Erde machte”. Wie also Christus der ‘Anfang’ von allem genannt wird und auch von ihm gesagt wird, daß er ‘im Anfang’ ist, so kann man auch sagen, dass Himmel und Erde ‘im Anfang’ geschaffen worden sind, indem man sie auch ‘Anfang’ nennt der nachher entstandenen und geschaffenen Dinge, über die der Gesetzgeber die Absicht hatte zu sprechen”. Fragment veröffentlicht in R. Devreesse, Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l’octateuque et des Rois, Rom, 1959, S. 106.

bestreiten und sagen, der Anfang sei die Zeit selbst, so soll er bedenken, daß er den Anfang in Zeitteile zu zerlegen hat: diese sind Anfang, Mitte und Ende. Einen Anfang vom Anfang ausklügeln, ist jedoch über alle Maßen lächerlich. Außerdem, wer den Anfang in zwei Teile teilt, der wird aus einem zwei oder vielmehr viele, ja unendlich viele machen, da ja das Geteilte immer wieder in neue Teile zerlegt werden kann. Um uns nun zu belehren, daß die Welt durch Gottes Willen in einem zeitlosen Moment entstanden ist, heißt es: ‚Im Anfang schuf er.‘ Andere Ausleger haben die Stelle, um den Sinn deutlicher zum Ausdruck zu bringen, folgendermaßen übersetzt: Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ schuf Gott, d. h. auf einmal, in einem Nu.<sup>31</sup>

Diese Überlegung verwendet ἀρχή im Sinne eines Anfangspunktes. Ein Punkt hat keine Ausdehnung, er ist ἀδιάστατος. Wie der Punkt keine Ausdehnung hat, so hat auch der Anfangspunkt der Zeit keine. Basilius legt dar, daß man sonst im Anfang wieder Teile unterscheiden könne, was dahin führen würde, daß ein Anfang wieder einen Anfang hat, was ja unannehmbar ist.

Die letztere Argumentation geht auf Aristoteles zurück.<sup>32</sup> Auch das Argument, daß man auf diese Weise zu einer unendlichen Reihe von ἀρχαί komme, was unannehmbar ist, ist aristotelisch.<sup>33</sup>

In dieser Interpretation wäre in ἐν ἀρχῇ das Momentane der Schöpfung zum Ausdruck gebracht. Diese Bedeutung wäre deutlicher in der griechischen Übersetzung ἐν κεφαλαίῳ, welche man, so sagt Basilius, bei anderen Interpreten findet. So übersetzt Aquila, dessen Absicht es war, eine vollkommen wörtliche Übersetzung des hebräischen Textes zu geben.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> In *Hex.* 16C–17A: Ἡ τάχα διὰ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον καὶ ἄχρονον τῆς δημιουργίας εἴρηται τὸ, “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν”, ἐπειδὴ ἀμερές τι καὶ ἀδιάστατον ἡ ἀρχή. Ὡς γὰρ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς ὁδοῦ οὐπὼ ὁδός, καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς οἰκίας οὐκ οἰκία, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοῦ χρόνου ἀρχὴ οὐπὼ χρόνος, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον. Εἰ δὲ φιλονεικῶν τις χρόνον εἶναι λέγοι τὴν ἀρχὴν, γινωσκέτω ὅτι διαιρήσει αὐτὴν εἰς τὰ τοῦ χρόνου μέρη. ταῦτα δὲ ἐστίν, ἀρχή, καὶ μέσα, καὶ τελευτή. Ἀρχὴν δὲ ἀρχῆς ἐπινοεῖν παντελῶς καταγέλαστον. Καὶ ὁ διχοτομῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν, δύο ποιήσει ἀντὶ μίας, μᾶλλον δὲ πολλὰς καὶ ἀπείρους, τοῦ διαιρεθέντος αἰεὶ εἰς ἕτερα τεμνομένου. Ἵνα τοίνυν διδαχθῶμεν ὁμοῦ τῇ βουλήσει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀχρόνως συνυφεστάναι τὸν κόσμον, εἴρηται τὸ, “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν”. Ὅπερ ἕτεροι τῶν ἐρμηνευτῶν, σαφέστερον τὸν νοῦν ἐκδιδόντες, εἰρήκασιν, “Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός, τοῦτέστιν ἀθρόως καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ.”

<sup>32</sup> Vgl. *Phys.* 189 a 30. ἔστι γὰρ ἀρχὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς, und *Met.* 1000 b 26–27 ... ὥστε συμβαίνει τῶν ἀρχῶν ἑτέρας ἀρχὰς εἶναι προτέρας, τοῦτο δ’ ἀδύνατον. Man muß beachten, daß ἀρχή bei Basilius hier die Bedeutung ‘Anfang’ hat, bei Aristoteles jedoch ‘Prinzip’.

<sup>33</sup> Siehe ‘Index Aristotelicus’ von Bonitz, s.v. ἀπειρον, *progressus in infinitum*.

<sup>34</sup> Siehe ‘Geschichte des Septuaginta-Textes’ in Rahlfs’ Edition der Septua-

## b) Gregorius von Nyssa

Gregorius' 'In Hexaëmeron' ist keine Predigt, sondern eine systematische Abhandlung mit stark philosophischem Charakter. Die Exegese von Genesis 1, 1 wird mit einer Betrachtung über die Beziehung zwischen Gottes Willen, seiner Weisheit, seiner Macht und dem Wesen der Dinge eingeleitet. Diese Betrachtung führt zum Ergebnis, daß man sich dies alles, wenn es sich um die Schöpfung handelt, als Einheit denken muß.<sup>35</sup> Mit dieser Betrachtung sagt Gregorius auf seine Art und Weise das, was Basilius in dem vorhergehenden Text sagte: ὁμοῦ τῇ βουλήσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἀχρόνως συνυφεστάναι τὸν κόσμον.

Es versteht sich daher, daß Gregorius nur Interesse für die zeitlose Interpretation von ἀρχή hat. Er sagt: „und statt zu behaupten, daß Gott alle Dinge auf einmal (insgesamt) machte, sagte er (Moses), daß Gott Himmel und Erde ἐν κεφαλαίῳ oder ἐν ἀρχῇ schuf. Die Bedeutung dieser beiden Worte κεφάλαιον und ἀρχή ist dieselbe. Durch beide wird ja in gleicher Weise das 'auf einmal' zum Ausdruck gebracht. Denn in κεφάλαιον gibt er an, daß alles 'insgesamt' geworden ist, ἀρχή gibt an 'unteilbar und ohne Ausdehnung'. Der ἀρχή ist ja jeder Gedanke an Ausdehnung fern. Wie der Punkt, <der ohne Ausdehnung ist>, die ἀρχή der Linie ist und das Atom, <das keine Ausdehnung besitzt>, die ἀρχή von etwas, das Masse besitzt, so ist auch der unteilbare Moment die ἀρχή der zeitlichen Ausdehnung. Die Schöpfung der Dinge auf einmal durch die unaussprechliche Macht Gottes wurde von Moses also die ἀρχή (oder κεφάλαιον) genannt, in der das All zustande kam."<sup>36</sup>

Etwas weiter unten macht Gregorius seine Absichten deutlicher,

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ginta, Stuttgart-Göttingen, 1926ff., S. VIII.

<sup>35</sup> Gregorii Nysseni quae supersunt opera, ed. Georgius H. Forbesius. Burtisland 1855, §7C, S. 14 (= P.G. 44, 69A): 'Ὡς ὁμοῦ τὰ πάντα τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ τὴν κτίσιν νοεῖσθαι, τὸ θέλημα, τὴν σοφίαν, τὴν δύναμιν, τὴν οὐσίαν τῶν ὄντων.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. Forbes, §8D, S. 16 (= P.G. 44, 72A): καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος πάντα τὰ ὄντα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν, εἶπεν ἐν κεφαλαίῳ, ἥτοι ἐν ἀρχῇ πεποιηκέναι τὸν θεὸν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Μία δὲ τῶν δύο φωνῶν ἡ σημασία, τῆς τε ἀρχῆς καὶ τοῦ κεφαλαίου. Δηλοῦται γὰρ ἐπίσης δι' ἑκατέρων τὸ ἄθρόον· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ κεφαλαίῳ, τὸ συλλήβδην τὰ πάντα γεγενῆσθαι περίσθησι, διὰ δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς δηλοῦται τὸ ἀκαρὲς τε καὶ ἀδιάστατον. Ἡ γὰρ ἀρχή παντὸς διαστηματικοῦ νοήματος ἄλλοτρίως ἔχει. Ὡς τὸ σημεῖον ἀρχῆς τῆς γραμμῆς, καὶ τοῦ ὅγκου τὸ ἄτομον, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἀκαρὲς τοῦ χρονικοῦ διαστήματος. Ἡ οὖν ἀθρόα τῶν ὄντων παρὰ ἧς ἀφράστου δυνάμεως τοῦ θεοῦ καταβολή, ἀρχή παρὰ τοῦ Μωϋσέως, ἦττον κεφάλαιον κατωνομάσθη, ἐν ᾗ τὸ πᾶν συστήναι λέγεται.

indem er sagt, daß die ἀρχή in Genesis 1, 1 meint, daß Gott von allen Dingen die Ausgangspunkte, die Ursache und die Kräfte insgesamt in einem unteilbaren Moment schuf und daß bei der ersten Bewegung seines Willens das Wesentliche jedes Dinges zustande kam.<sup>37</sup>

Und wenn man dann fragt, was die Bedeutung der weiteren Schöpfungsgeschichte sei, so muß die Antwort lauten, daß dies die Darstellung einer natürlichen Reihenfolge oder Ordnung in den Dingen ist, nicht einer Reihenfolge in Gottes schöpferischer Aktivität.

### c) Ambrosius

Einige Jahre nach dem Tode des Basilius (379) sind seine Predigten 'In Hexaëmeron' schon in den Westen gedrungen, und in 386<sup>38</sup> bearbeitet Ambrosius sie für seine Zuhörer, die Gläubigen von Mailand. Diese Bearbeitung ist überliefert worden unter den Namen 'Exameron'. Über Ambrosius' Abhängigkeit von Basilius besteht kein Zweifel, da man fast auf jeder Seite in Ambrosius' Werken einem Basiliustext in Übersetzung oder in freier Bearbeitung begegnet.

Jedoch unterscheidet Ambrosius' Werk sich wesentlich von Basilius, besonders in jenem Teil der ersten Predigt, der uns hier beschäftigt, und zwar in der Interpretation von *In principio fecit deus*. Dieser Unterschied geht zu allererst aus der Tatsache hervor, daß Ambrosius' Aufmerksamkeit viel stärker als die von Basilius dem *deus fecit* zugewandt ist, m. a. W. dem Schöpfer. Er widersetzt sich jenen Systemen, die neben Gott noch ein anderes Prinzip annehmen,—ein Standpunkt, in jenen Zeiten besonders von den Manichäern vertreten. Auch Basilius lehnt diese Theorien, wie vorher gezeigt, ab, aber Ambrosius beschäftigt sich viel intensiver damit. Bezeichnend für dieses Verhalten ist die Tatsache, daß er, abweichend von Basilius, die erste Predigt mit einem Angriff auf die griechischen philosophischen Systeme beginnt, die mehr als ein

<sup>37</sup> Ed. Forbes, §9A-B (P.G. 44, 72B): Οὐκοῦν τοῦτο νοεῖν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κοσμογονίας ὑποτίθεται, ὅτι πάντων τῶν ὄντων τὰς ἀφορμὰς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας καὶ τὰς δυνάμεις συλλήβδην ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἀκαρεῖ κατεβάλετο, καὶ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τοῦ θελήματος ὁρμῇ ἡ ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων οὐσία συνέδραμεν, οὐρανὸς, αἰθὴρ, κτλ. In 77D spricht Gregorius von einer σπερματικὴ δύναμις.

<sup>38</sup> Vgl. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les "Confessions" de saint Augustin*, Paris, 1950, S. 101-102.

Prinzip annehmen.<sup>39</sup> Er lehnt nachdrücklich Platons Auffassung ab, daß Gott, indem er die Idee betrachtet, die Welt geschaffen hat aus der Materie (welche vorhanden war). Das würde bedeuten, daß die Materie Ursache von allem sei.<sup>40</sup> Es würde auch bedeuten, daß Gott Nachahmer<sup>41</sup> und Lehrling<sup>42</sup> der Materie ist, da er sich bei seiner Aktivität nach der Materie richten müsse, was eine gewisse Abhängigkeit davon erfordert.<sup>43</sup> Ambrosius kommt immer wieder auf diesen Punkt zurück, und so liegt bei ihm der Nachdruck in dieser Passage woanders als bei Basilius. Andererseits gebraucht er größtenteils das Material, welches Basilius ihm bietet. Demzufolge ist die Struktur seiner Darlegung weniger durchsichtig.

Ein anderer Unterschied ist, daß Basilius primär Kommentator ist, der den Bibeltext mittels philosophischer Betrachtungen erklärt, während Ambrosius mehr polemisiert und dabei seine Thesen mit lauter Texten aus den Heiligen Schrift bekräftigt.

Wir wollen nach diesen einleitenden Bemerkungen die Passagen bei Ambrosius, welche den obengenannten von Basilius entsprechen, betrachten.

#### α) „Nicht ohne Anfang“

Ebenso wie Basilius stellt Ambrosius fest, daß *In principio* eine Ablehnung jener Auffassung in der Philosophie enthält, die

<sup>39</sup> Dieser Einleitung ist das obengenannte Buch von J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* gewidmet. Vgl. *Rez. Vig. Christ.* 18 (1964), S. 251 (J.C.M. van Winden).

<sup>40</sup> *Exam.* I, 1: *deumque non tamquam creatorem materiae sed tamquam artificem ad exemplar, hoc est ideam intendentem fecisse mundum de materia, quam vocant ὕλην, quae gignendi causas rebus omnibus dedisse adseratur* (S. 3, 5–9 Sch.). (Und Gott habe nicht als Schöpfer der Materie, sondern nur als Bildner, dem ein Bild, d.i. die Idee vorschwebte, die Welt aus der Materie, Hyle genannt, gemacht. Diese habe, behaupten sie, für alle Dinge die Entstehungsursache abgegeben. Übers. J.E. Niederhuber in B.K.V. 1914, wie auch die der anderen Zitate.).

<sup>41</sup> *Exam.* I 2,5: *non idea quadam duce imitatore materiae* (S. 5, 1 Sch.). (nicht aber gleichsam nur an der Hand einer Idee der Nachformer der Materie. Übers. B.K.V.).

<sup>42</sup> *Exam.* I 2,7: *neque discipulum quendam materiae, quam contemplando mundum posset effingere, sed auctorem deum exprimentum putavit* (S. 6, 14–16 Sch.). (Er wachte nicht auf) einen Schüler der Materie, der letztere erst studieren müsste, um die Welt formen zu können, sondern glaubte Gott als ihren Urheber aussprechen zu sollen. Übers. B.K.V.).

<sup>43</sup> Diese anti-dualistische Argumentation findet man auch schon bei Tertullianus. Vgl. J.C.M. van Winden, *Some Additional Observations on St. Ambrose's Concept of Matter*, *Vig. Christ.* 18 (1964), 144–145; see 59–60 in this volume.

behauptet, daß die Welt ewig wie Gott sei. *Dedit ergo principium mundo, dedit etiam creaturae infirmitatem, ne ἄναρχον, ne increatum et divinae consortem substantiae crederemus* (Ex. I 3, 8, s. 7, 11–12 Sch.). Bemerkenswert in dieser Passage sind die Worte *dedit etiam creaturae infirmitatem*; hier tritt die polemische Einstellung des Ambrosius hervor. Bei Basilius findet man die Schwäche des Geschöpfes in diesem Zusammenhang nicht erwähnt. Wie schon gesagt, lehnt Ambrosius sich schon am Anfang seiner ersten Predigt gegen die philosophischen Systeme auf, welche mehr als ein Prinzip annahmen. Er sagt sofort: *quid igitur tam inconueniens quam ut aeternitatem operis (= mundi = κόσμου = οὐρανοῦ) cum dei omnipotentis coniungerent aeternitate vel ipsum opus deum esse dicerent* (Was wäre nun so ungereimt als ihre (der Philosophen) verquickung der Ewigkeit der Schöpfung mit der Ewigkeit des allmächtigen Gottes, und ihre Identifizierung der Schöpfung mit Gott. Übers. B.K.V.). (Ex. I 1, 2, S. 3, 13–16 Sch.). Dieser Text stimmt überein mit dem oben von Basilius zitierten (Siehe Anm. 20), der am Ende der Darlegung über *μη ἄναρχον* erscheint. Daß Ambrosius diesen Text so hervorhebt, ist bezeichnend für die andere Zielsetzung seines Werkes, die wir gerade erwähnten. Man sieht in dieser Passage auch, was er mit *divinae consortem substantiae* in dem vorher zitierten Text meint.

Nachdem Ambrosius in Ex. I 3, 8 eine große Anzahl von Schriftstellen angeführt hat, welche von einem Schaffen Gottes sprechen, sagt er: *cum ergo tot oracula audias, quibus testatur deus quod fecerit mundum, noli eum sine principio esse credere* (Ex. I 3, 10, S. 91–2 Sch.). (Soviele Aussprüche also vernimmst du, worin Gott bezeugt, dass er die Welt geschaffen hat: halte sie nicht für anfangslos. Übers. B.K.V.). Wieder stellt sich heraus, wie die ganze Erörterung von Ambrosius um *ne ἄναρχον* konzentriert ist. Auch der polemische Charakter seiner Darlegung tritt hier deutlich hervor.

### β) Sieben Bedeutungen von *principium*

#### αα) *Principium* in der Zeit

Basilius kam in einem geordneten Gedankengang zu der Frage, welche Bedeutung ἀρχή in Genesis 1, 1 habe. Er unterscheidet eine ἀρχή in der Zeit von einer ἀρχή κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν und stellt danach fest, daß der Genesistext, wenn er von einem 'Anfang' spricht, einen Anfang in der Zeit im Auge hat. Hier sind wieder vier Bedeutungen zu unterscheiden.

Nun wollen wir betrachten, wie Ambrosius diese Passage bearbeitet. Nach seiner Polemik gegen ἄναρχον sagt er am Anfang von Ex. I 4 als Folgerung aus dem Vorhergehenden: *Principium igitur esse docet qui dicit: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram.* (Dass es nun einen (Welt-)Anfang gibt, lehrt der, welcher spricht: "Im Anfang hat Gott den Himmel und die Erde geschaffen." Übers. B.K.V.). Und dann fängt er mit einer Aufzählung an von Bedeutungen von *principium*, die folgendermaßen lautet:

*Principium aut ad tempus refertur*

*aut ad numerum*

*aut ad fundamentum, quomodo in aedificanda domo initium  
fundamentum est.*

*principium quoque et conversionis et depravationis dici posse scripturarum  
cognoscimus auctoritate.*

*est et principium artis ars ipsa, ex qua artificum diversorum deinceps coepit  
operatio.*

*est etiam principium bonorum operum finis optimus, ut misericordiae  
principium est deo placere quod facias: etenim ad conferendum hominibus  
subsidium maxime provocamur.*

*est etiam virtus divina, quae hac exprimitur adpellatione* (S. 10, 2–11 Sch.).  
(‘Anfang’ kann entweder auf die Zeit oder auf die Zahl oder auf das Fundament bezogen werden, wie bei einem Hausbau das Fundament den Anfang bildet.

Dass man auch von einem Anfang einer Bekehrung, einer Entartung reden kann, wissen wir auf Grund der Schrift.

Desgleichen hat die Kunst ihren Anfang gerade im Können, von dem in der Folgezeit das Schaffen der verschiedenen Künstler seinen Aufgang nahm.

Es haben ebenso die guten Werke ihren Anfang, (nämlich) den guten Endzweck. So besteht der Anfang der Barmherzigkeit darin, es möchte sein Tun Gott gefallen: der stärkste Beweggrund zur Hilfeleistung an die Menschen.

Es gibt übrigens auch eine Eigenschaft Gottes die man so bezeichnet. Übers. B.K.V.).

Nach dieser Aufzählung gibt Ambrosius an, was die ersten drei Bedeutungen für Genesis 1, 1 aussagen. Er sagt: *ad tempus refertur, si velis dicere in quo tempore deus fecit caelum et terram, id est in exordio mundi, quando fieri coepit, sicut ait sapientia: „cum pararet caelos, cum illo eram“* (Prov. 8, 27).

*ad numerum autem si referamus, ita convenit ut accipias: in primis fecit caelum et terram, deinde colles regiones fines inhabitabiles vel sic: ante reliquas visibiles creaturas, diem noctem ligna fructifera animantium genera diversa, caelum et terram fecit.*

*si vero ad fundamentum referas, principium terrae fundamentum esse legisti dicente sapientia: „quando fortia faciebat fundamenta terrae, eram penes illum disponens“ (Prov. 8, 29f., S. 10, 11–22 Sch.).*

(Eine Zeitbeziehung liegt vor, wenn man ausdrücken wollte, in welchem Zeitpunkte Gott den Himmel und die Erde geschaffen hat, d.i. im Augenblicke der Weltentstehung, als sie zu werden anfang. So spricht die Weisheit: „Als er bereitete den Himmel, war ich bei ihm.“

Falls wir aber die Beziehung auf die Zahl machen wollten, wurde man's am besten so verstehen: Zuerst hat er den Himmel und die Erde geschaffen, sodann die Anhöhen, das Geländer, die bewohnbaren Gegenden; oder so: Vor allen anderen sichtbaren Geschöpfen, vor dem Tage, der Nacht, den Fruchtbäumen, den verschiedenen Tierarten, hat er den Himmel und die Erde Geschaffen.

Macht man aber die Beziehung auf das Fundament, so beruht, wie du gelesen, der Erde Anfang in einer Grundfeste; denn so spricht die Weisheit: „Als er schuf die starken Grundfeste der Erde, war ich ordnend bei ihm“. Übers. B.K.V.).

Wenn man den Text von Ambrosius mit dem des Basilius vergleicht, stellt sich einerseits eine starke Übereinstimmung, andererseits jedoch ein wesentlicher Unterschied heraus. Die Übereinstimmung liegt in der Aufzählung. Wenn man von der letztgenannten Bedeutung, der *virtus divina*, absieht, kann man folgende Übereinstimmungen feststellen:

1. *ad tempus* = κατὰ χρόνον
2. *ad numerum* kann man gleichstellen mit κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν.

Mann kann gegen diese Gleichstellung einwenden, daß Basilius diese Bedeutung auf Genesis 1, 1 im Gegensatz zu Ambrosius, nicht anwendbar findet. Dies ist tatsächlich ein Unterschied in der Anwendung, aber sachlich stimmen die beiden überein. Sowohl *ad numerum* wie κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν will heißen, daß es sich um das handelt, was das Erste ist. Nun behauptet Basilius, daß Himmel und Erde nicht als Erstes geschaffen worden seien, da es noch eine geistige Realität gäbe, die dem vorhergeht. Ambrosius

hingegen beschränkt sich hier auf die materielle Realität und sagt dann, daß Himmel und Erde die ersten Dinge seien.<sup>44</sup>

3. *ad fundamentum* = ὅθεν γίνεται τι, wobei Basilius den θεμέλιος als Beispiel angibt.
4. *principium conversionis et depravationis* kann man mit der πρώτη κίνησις gleichstellen; Aristoteles sprach schon von der ἀρχή τῆς μεταβολῆς.
5. *ars ipsa* = τέχνη.
6. *finis* = τέλος.

Aber neben dieser Übereinstimmung im Materiellen gibt es einen großen Unterschied in formeller Hinsicht. Während bei Basilius eine deutliche Einteilung vorlag, bei der die Bedeutungen 3 bis 6 eine Unterteilung der ersten bildeten, ist bei Ambrosius von einer Einteilung nicht die Rede. Wohl werden die ersten drei einzeln genannt, und diese werden später nur auf Genesis 1, 1 angewandt, aber nirgendwo zeigt sich, warum sie einzeln dargestellt werden.

Basilius' Darstellung der Bedeutungen 3 bis 6 war folgendermaßen: er gab erst an, daß diese Bedeutungen in der Heiligen Schrift zu finden waren, und dann fing er an, sie auf Genesis anzuwenden. Ambrosius' Text verrät noch einzelne Spuren dieser Darstellung. So appelliert er bei der vierten Bedeutung an die *auctoritas scripturarum*, und bei der sechsten kann man noch Spuren von Basilius' Erläuterung von der Heiligen Schrift aus entdecken. Aber mehr als nur Spuren sind es nicht. Bei der Anwendung der ersten drei Bedeutungen auf die Genesis kann weiterhin bemerkt werden, daß Ambrosius, abweichend von Basilius, in zwei Fällen einen Proverbia-text zitiert, um die Anwendung zu stützen. Hier zeigt sich wieder das mehr polemische Verhalten von Ambrosius. Wenn man das ziemlich unordentliche Ganze übersieht, vermutet man doch, daß Ambrosius die Struktur von Basilius' Darlegung über die Bedeutungen von ἀρχή eigentlich nicht gesehen hat; es war auch ein Thema, das für ihn nicht so wichtig war, da seine

<sup>44</sup> Philo stellt auch die Bedeutung von ἀρχή κατ' ἀριθμόν neben jene der ἀρχή κατὰ χρόνον, wenn er in *De opificio mundi* 27 sagt: Εἰ δ' ἀρχὴ μὴ παραλαμβάνεται τανῦν ἢ κατὰ χρόνον, εἰκὸς ἂν εἴη μηνύεσθαι τὴν κατ' ἀριθμόν, ὥς τὸ "ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν" ἴσον εἶναι τῷ "πρῶτον ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανόν". (Wenn 'Anfang' hier nicht als Anfang in der Zeit aufgefasst wird, könnte vielleicht der Anfang in Zahl damit angedeutet sein; "Im Anfang machte er" ist dann dasselbe wie "als erster machte er den Himmel").

Aufmerksamkeit auf andere Dinge konzentriert war, wie wir vorher schon gesehen haben. Trotzdem hat er dieses Thema nicht überschlagen wollen. Wenn jedoch Basilius' Text nicht überliefert worden wäre, so wäre Ambrosius' Darlegung für uns kaum verständlich.

Wir folgen noch kurz der Erörterung von Ambrosius, um den Unterschied zwischen ihm und Basilius noch besser hervortreten zu lassen. Nachdem er angegeben hat, wie die Bedeutung von *fundamentum* auf Genesis 1, 1 anwendbar ist, fährt er folgendermaßen fort: *est etiam bonae principium disciplinae, sicut est illud: „initium sapientiae timor domini“*. (Prov. 1, 7; Ps. 110, 10), *quoniam qui timet dominum declinat errorem et ad virtutis semitam vias suas dirigit. nisi enim quis timuerit deum non potest renuntiare peccato*. (S. 10, 22–11, 1 Sch.). (Auch eine tüchtige Schulung hat ihren Anfang. Darauf bezieht sich das bekannte Wort: „Der Weisheit Anfang ist die Furcht des Herrn“. Wer nämlich den Herrn fürchtet, meidet die Sünde und lenkt seine Wege nach der Tugend Pfad; wer Gott nicht fürchtet, vermag ja der Sünde nicht zu entsagen. Übers. B.K.V.).

Basilius gab in der oben zitierten Passage diesen Bibeltext als Beispiel von ἀρχή an in der Bedeutung von 'Fundament'. Daraus darf man schließen, daß Ambrosius hier auf *principium* im Sinne von *fundamentum* zurückgreift. Die Worte: *est etiam bonae principium disciplinae*, haben dann die Bedeutung von: *principium* kann auch die Bedeutung von Fundament in ethischem oder moralischem Sinne haben. Diese Bemerkung hat jedoch kaum noch etwas mit Genesis 1, 1 zu tun.

Ambrosius gleitet von seinem Thema, der Interpretation des ersten Verses von 'Genesis', ab. Dies wird noch deutlicher in dem, was er weiterhin sagt: *quod aequè etiam de illo possumus accipere: „mensis hic initium mensuum erit vobis“* (Ex. 12, 2), *quamvis et de tempore istud accipiat, quia de pascha domini loquebatur* (S. 11, 2–3 Sch.) (Wir könnten ebenso auch von der folgenden Stelle annehmen: 'Dieser Monat (Nissan) soll euch der Anfang der Monate sein' Sie muß freilich auch zeitlich verstanden werden, weil eben vom Pascha des Herrn die Rede war. Übers. B.K.V.). Das heißt: jene Bedeutung von Fundament kann man auch in *initium* (= *principium*) von Ex. 12, 2, finden, obwohl *initium* hier auch in temporalem Sinne aufgefaßt werden kann. Und damit gelangt Ambrosius zu einem Thema, das ihn offenbar mehr interessiert als alle vorhergehenden Betrachtungen über die Bedeutung von *principium*, nämlich das

Osterfest. Man muß hierbei beachten, daß diese Predigten eine Art Fastenpredigten waren, die die Gläubigen auf dieses Fest vorbereiten mußten. Es ist trotzdem ein bemerkenswerter Unterschied gegenüber Basilius, der sich auf die Interpretation des Genesis-textes beschränkt. Bei dieser Interpretation zeigt Basilius starke Verbindung mit der griechischen Philosophie. Bei Ambrosius ist diese viel weniger stark. Bezeichnend war der Unterschied bei der Behandlung der Bedeutungen von ἀρχή in Genesis 1, 1. Ambrosius zieht sich gleichsam ganz auf die Bibel zurück. Die Philosophica sind bei ihm nicht viel mehr als eine Art Verbrämung.

In *Exameron* I 4, 15 spricht Ambrosius noch von der Bedeutung des *principium*, das er als siebtes nannte, die *virtus divina*, und hier als *initium mysticum* bezeichnet. Die Darstellung davon stellen wir zurück, um erst die nachfolgende Passage zu behandeln, die ein Pendant bei Basilius hat.

#### ββ) Zeitloser Anfang

In *Exameron* I 4, 16 sagt Ambrosius; *possumus etiam intellegere: „in principio fecit deus caelum et terram“, id est ante tempus, sicut initium viae nondum via est et initium domus nondum domus* (S. 13, 21–23 Sch.) (Wir können's auch so verstehen: 'Im Anfang hat Gott den Himmel und die Erde geschaffen', d.i. vor der Zeit. So ist der Anfang eines Hauses noch nicht das Haus. Übers. B.K.V.). Die Übereinstimmung mit Basilius zeigt sich an Beispielen. Es gibt jedoch auch einen bemerkenswerten Unterschied. Während Basilius vom 'zeitlosen Anfang' spricht, was bei ihm im deutlichen Gegensatz zu der vorhergehenden Passage steht, in der die Rede ist vom 'Anfang in der Zeit', spricht Ambrosius hier von einem Anfang 'vor der Zeit'. Damit meint er offenbar dasselbe wie Basilius; 'vor der Zeit' heißt bei Ambrosius 'bevor der Lauf der Zeit einen Anfang nahm', m. a. W. der Anfangspunkt der Zeit, und das ist identisch mit 'zeitlosem Anfang', von dem Basilius auch sagte, daß es 'noch keine Zeit' wäre. Die Einstellung, die bei Basilius so verständlich war, ist bei Ambrosius verlorengegangen, weil bei ihm der 'Anfang in der Zeit' nicht der Hauptbegriff ist, sondern eine der vielen Bedeutungen von *principium*. Auch hier kann man nur mit Hilfe die Struktur in Ambrosius' Werk entdecken.

Ambrosius fährt fort: *denique alii dixerunt ἐν κεφαλαίῳ quasi in capite, quo significatur in brevi et in exiguo momento summa operationis impleta, sunt ergo et qui principium non pro tempore accipiant, sed ante*

*tempus et κεφάλαιον vel caput, ut dicamus latine, quasi summam operis* (S. 13, 23–14, 3 Sch.) (So haben denn auch andere die Lesart ἐν κεφαλαίῳ, gleichsam ‘im Haupte’, wodurch angedeutet wird, daß der Hauptinhalt der Schöpfung in einem kurzen, winsigen Augenblick vollendet wird. Es gibt sonach auch Autoren, welche das Wort Anfang nicht zeitlich, sondern vorzeitlich, und κεφάλαιον over caput, wie wir lateinisch sagen, als den Inbegriff der Schöpfungswerken fassen.). Ambrosius stellt hier mit Nachdruck dem Anfang ‘vor der Zeit’ (d. i. dem zeitlosen Anfang) den Anfang ‘in der Zeit’ gegenüber. Diese Gliederung war in seiner vorhergehenden Erörterung jedoch nicht klar geworden. Es sei noch betont, daß er mit *summa operis* die Idee der Gesamtheit, welche Basilios’ ὁθρῶς enthält, zum Ausdruck bringt.

## B. Spirituelle Interpretation

### a) Ambrosius’ *initium mysticum*

Wir kehren jetzt zu jener Bedeutung von *principium* bei Ambrosius zurück, die kein Pendant bei Basilios hat: die *virtus divina* oder das *initium mysticum*. Man darf jedoch nicht denken, daß diese Interpretation von ἐν ἀρχῇ aus der Zeit nach Basilios stammt. Im Gegenteil, es ist die älteste Exegese. Wir wollen von Ambrosius’ Text ausgehen: *est etiam initium mysticum, ut illud est: „ego sum primus et novissimus, initium et finis“* (Apoc. 1, 17; 21, 6) *et illud in evangelio praecipue, quod interrogatus dominus quis esset respondit: „initium quod et loquor vobis“* (Joh. 8, 25) (S. 13, 4–7 Sch.) (Es gibt auch einen mystischen Anfang, so wenn es heißt ‘Ich bin der Erste und der Letzte, der Anfang und das Ende’, und insbesondere, wenn der Herr im Evangelium auf die Frage, wer er sei, erwiderte: ‘Der Anfang, den ich auch zu euch rede’.).

In diesen zwei Texten sagt Christus von sich selber, daß er der Anfang sei. Infolgedessen läßt sich *In principio* interpretieren als *In Christo*. Diese Interpretation übersteigt die wörtliche, wie de Lubac in seiner Einführung zu der Übersetzung von Origines’ Homilien auf Exodus zutreffend bemerkt: «*Comprendre la Loi spirituellement, c’est donc ‘passer du Vieux Testament au Nouveau’; c’est observer ‘l’ordre de la Foi’, qui va de l’histoire au mystère*»<sup>45</sup>. Ambrosius spricht dann auch von *initium mysticum*.

<sup>45</sup> Origène, Homélies sur l’Exode, trad. de P. Fortier, S.J., Introd. et notes de H. de Lubac S.J. (Sources Chrétiennes 16), Paris 1947, S. 18.

Er fährt fort: *qui vere et secundum divinitatem est initium omnium, quia nemo ante ipsum. et finis quia nemo ultra ipsum est. Secundum evangelium initium est viarum domini in opera eius, ut per ipsum diceret hominum genus vias domini sequi et operari opera Dei—in hoc ergo principio, id est in Christo fecit deus caelum et terram* (S. 13, 7–12 Sch.) (Er ist in Wahrheit seiner Gottheit nach der Anfang von allem, weil niemand vor ihm ist, und das Ende, weil niemand nach ihm ist. Nach dem Evangelium ist er der Anfang der Wege des Herrn zur Vollbringung seiner Werke; durch ihn soll das Menschengeschlecht die Wege des Herrn gehen und die Werke Gottes vollführen lernen. In diesem Anfang also, d.h. in Christus, hat Gott den Himmel und die Erde geschaffen.). Die Bedeutung des ersten Satzes ist verständlich: seiner Göttlichkeit zufolge ist Christus Anfang von allem. Der zweite hingegen ruft ein Problem hervor. Die Worte *initium est viarum domini in opera eius* bilden nämlich ein Zitat aus Prov. 8, 22: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ. Nun hat es den Anschein, als ob Ambrosius diese Worte dem Evangelium entnimmt. Ein derartiger Irrtum jedoch ist kaum anzunehmen. Man wird diesen Text deshalb folgendermaßen interpretieren müssen: aus der Evangeliumsgeschichte ergibt sich, wie Christus, um es mit den Worten aus 'Proverbia' auszudrücken, „der Anfang der Wege des Herren ist nach seinen Werken“. Dies wird dann erklärt mit den Worten: *ut disceret per ipsum hominum genus vias domini sequi et operari opera dei*; in dieser Erklärung verweisen die Worte *vias domini* und *opera dei* auf den Proverbia text.

Ambrosius will nun die Ausdrücke *per ipsum* und *in Christo* noch mit einem Schriftstücktext 'belegen'. Er benutzt dafür zwei Texte, welche in der spirituellen Interpretation eine Große Rolle gespielt haben, wie sich noch herausstellen wird. Er sagt: *quia per ipsum omnia facta sunt et sine ipso factum es nihil quod factum est* (Joh. 1, 3): *in ipso, quia „in ipso constant omnia“ et ipse est „primogenitus totius creaturae“* (Kol. 1, 17 und 15). Dies *primogenitus*, so fährt er fort, ist zweifach zu deuten: es kann bedeuten, daß er entweder der Erste ist, oder daß er heilig ist, da die *primogeniti* heilig sind, so wie Israel *primogenitus* genannt wurde, nicht weil er der älteste war, sondern weil er heiliger war als die übrigen (*sive quia ante omnem creaturam, sive quia sanctus, quia primogeniti sancti sunt, ut primogenitus Istrahel, non quia ante omnes, sed quia sanctior ceteris*). Und letzteres gilt auch für Christus, nicht nur wegen seiner Göttlichkeit, sondern auch sofern er einen Körper angenommen hat (*secundum corporis susceptionem*).

Man sieht auch hier wieder, wie Ambrosius dazu neigt, von der eigentlichen Interpretation des Genesistextes abzuweichen.

b) Wurzeln der spirituellen Interpretation: Proverbia, Johannes-evangelium, Paulus

Die Exegese von Genesis 1, 1, bei der ἐν ἀρχῇ die Bedeutung von ἐν Χριστῷ erhält, hat ihren Ursprung lange vor Ambrosius und Basilius. Sie ist das Resultat der frühesten Christologie und ist im Kern schon bei den ersten Apologeten zu finden.

Als die Christen anfangen, sich auf ihre Lehre zu besinnen und sie denen gegenüber, die außerhalb ihrer Gemeinschaft standen, zu verantworten, mußte die Göttlichkeit Christi, zu der man sich in der Glaubenspraxis bekannte, als Problem hervortreten, besonders die Frage, wie das Verhältnis zwischen Christus und dem Vater sei und wie die Einheit in Gott festgehalten werden konnte. Die frühchristlichen Denker haben die übermenschliche Dimension Christi in den Büchern der Bibel wiederzufinden gesucht. Das war die einzige Stelle, wo sie eine Antwort auf ihre Fragen finden konnten.

Von fundamentaler Bedeutung sind hierbei die nachfolgenden Texte gewesen: zuallererst der Anfang des Johannesevangeliums: „Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort.“ Der Ursprung des Logosbegriffes in diesem Text hat oft zur Diskussion gestanden. Manchmal hat man versucht, es von der griechischen Philosophie aus zu erklären, vor allem von der Stoa aus. Es erscheint jedoch viel wahrscheinlicher, daß der Ursprung im alten Testament liegt, und zwar im Text von Genesis 1, wo gesagt wird, daß durch Gottes Wort alles zustande kam. Bei der Erklärung dieses Textes durch jüdische Gelehrte hat jenes Wort Gottes, gleichsam eine konkrete Gestalt bekommen. Hierbei waren die Texte über die Weisheit aus 'Proverbia' von großem Einfluß. Diese Betrachtungen bilden den Hintergrund des Logosbegriffes in Johannes 1, 1ff., und die griechische Philosophie ist höchstens eine Nebenquelle.<sup>46</sup>

Der zweite fundamentale Text ist Proverbia 8, 22–23, wo die Weisheit über sich selbst sagt: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέν με ἐν ἀρχῇ. „Der Herr

<sup>46</sup> R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium I*, Freiburg–Wien–Basel, Herder, 1965, S. 257–269. Siehe auch H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1964, S. 177ff.

schuf mich als den Anfang seiner Wege nach seinen Werken; vor der Zeit gründete er mich im Anfang.“ Wenn man bedenkt, daß in I Kor. 1, 24 Christus ‘Gottes Weisheit’ genannt wurde, ist es verständlich, daß man den Proverbiatext als von Christus selber gesprochen betrachtete. Er sagt dort also, daß er ἀρχή und ἐν ἀρχῇ ist. Aus dieser Tatsache folgerte Acacius schon, wie oben gezeigt (S. Anm. 30), daß diese beiden Ausdrücke dasselbe bedeuteten. Man kann daher statt Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος (Joh. 1, 1) auch lesen Ἀρχὴ ἦν ὁ λόγος. Christus ist also λόγος, σοφία, ἀρχή. Demzufolge kann man auch sagen: ἐν ἀρχῇ = ἐν σοφίᾳ = ἐν λόγῳ = ἐν Χριστῷ. Diese frühchristlichen Betrachtungen wollen zeigen, wie Gott, bevor er zu den Menschen in dem Menschen Jesus Christus sprach, schon durch sein Wort, den präexistenten Christus, vom Anfang der Schöpfung an sprach.<sup>47</sup>

Nachfolgend wird eine Übersicht von den Texten dargeboten, die uns zu diesem Thema überliefert sind. Die meisten findet man auch in der Einführung von E. Evans in dessen Ausgabe mit Kommentar von Tertullians *Adversus Praxean* (London, S.P.C.K., 1948). Dort sind diese Texte im Hinblick auf den Logosbegriff zusammengestellt. Bei uns bildet der ἀρχή-Begriff den Ausgangspunkt.

### c) Justin

In *Apol.* I, 59 interpretiert Justin Genesis 1, 1–3. Zu den Worten „Gott sprach: ‚es werde Licht‘. Und es ward Licht“, bemerkt er: ὥστε λόγῳ θεοῦ ἐκ τῶν ὑποκειμένων καὶ προδηλωθέντων διὰ Μωυσέως γεγενῆσθαι ὑμεῖς πεισθῆναι δύνασθε. Die Bibel lehrt also, daß durch Gottes Wort aus vorliegenden, von Moses erwähnten Stoffen die ganze Welt entstanden ist, und Justin findet es wichtig, daß Plato dasselbe lehrt. Man könnte in diesem Text den Worten λόγῳ θεοῦ weniger Gewicht beimessen; die nachfolgenden Texte werden jedoch dazu zwingen, das doch zu tun. Man bedenke auch, was vorher über die jüdischen Betrachtungen über Gottes Wort gesagt worden ist. Man muß bemerken, daß man es hier noch nicht mit einer Interpretation von ἐν ἀρχῇ zu tun hat.

In *Apol.* II, 6 sagt Justin: ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἐκείνου, ὁ μόνος λεγόμενος κυρίως

<sup>47</sup> Über den Ursprung der Idee der Präexistenz, siehe R. Schnackenburg, o. c., S. 290ff. Über deren Entwicklung im frühen Christentum, siehe L. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung und Vorsehung* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, herausgeg. von M. Schmaus und A. Grillmeier, Bd. II, Fasz. 2a), Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder, 1963 und die dort angegebene Literatur.

υἱός, ὁ λόγος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνῶν καὶ γεννώμενος, ὅτε τὴν ἀρχὴν δι' αὐτοῦ πάντα ἔκτισε καὶ ἐκόσμησε, Χριστὸς μὲν κατὰ τὸ κεχρῖσθαι καὶ κοσμήσαι τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ τὸν θεὸν λέγεται, ὄνομα καὶ αὐτὸ περιέχον ἄγνωστον σημασίαν, ὃν τρόπον καὶ τὸ θεὸς προσαγόρευμα οὐκ ὄνομά ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ πράγματος δυσεξηγήτου ἔμφυτος τῇ φύσει τῶν ἀνθρώπων δόξα. Ἰησοῦς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπου καὶ σωτῆρος ὄνομα καὶ σημασίαν ἔχει. (Sein Sohn aber, der allein im eigentlichen Sinne sein Sohn heißt, der Logos, der vor aller Schöpfung in ihm war und der gezeugt wurde, als er im Anfange alles durch ihn schuf und ordnete, wird Christus genannt, weil er gesalbt wurde und Gott durch ihn alles ordnete, ein Name, der ebenfalls einen unerkennbaren Begriff umschließt, sowie auch die Bezeichnung 'Gott' kein Name, sondern nur eine der Menschennatur angeborene Vorstellung eines unerklärlichen Wesens ist. 'Jesus' aber hat Namen und Begriff eines Menschen und Erlösers. Übers. G. Rauschen, B.K.V. 1913). Bemerkenswert ist, was hier über den Namen Christus gesagt wird: im Gegensatz zu dem Namen Jesus ist Christus kein adäquater Name, ebensowenig wie der Name Gott es für den Vater ist. Hier ist die Rede vom präexistenten Christus, der klar und deutlich in die göttliche Sphäre erhoben wird. Er war „vor der Schöpfung zusammen mit dem Vater und wurde gezeugt, als der Vater durch ihn alles schuf und ordnete“. In diesem Text kann man zwei Stadien unterscheiden, welche Theophilus von Antiochien später mit λόγος ἐνδιάθετος und λόγος προφορικός bezeichnen wird.

In *Dial.* 61, 1 sagt Justin, daß sich in der Heiligen Schrift zeigt, daß Gott im Anfang (man könnte auch übersetzen 'wie ein Anfang') vor allen Geschöpfen eine δύναμις λογική aus sich selbst erzeugt hat, welche vom Heiligen Geist, d. h. von der Heiligen Schrift, mit vielen Namen bezeichnet wird, u. a. υἱός, σοφία, λόγος. Der Text lautet: μαρτύριον δὲ καὶ ἄλλο ὑμῖν ... ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν δώσω, ὅτι ἀρχὴν πρὸ πάντων τῶν κτισμάτων ὁ θεὸς γεγέννηκε δύναμιν τινα ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ λογικὴν ἣτις καὶ δόξα κυρίου (z. B. Exod. 16, 7) ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου καλεῖται, ποτὲ δὲ υἱός (Ps. 2, 7 usw.), ποτὲ δὲ σοφία (Prov. 8), ποτὲ δὲ ἄγγελος, ποτὲ δὲ θεός, ποτὲ δὲ κύριος καὶ λόγος. (Noch ein anderes Zeugnis will ich euch aus der Schrift geben. Vor allen Geschöpfen als Anfang hat Gott aus sich eine vernünftige Kraft erzeugt, welche vom Heiligen Geiste auch Herrlichkeit des Herrn, ein andermal Sohn, dann Weisheit, bald Engel, bald Gott, bald Herr und Logos genannt wird.).

In *Dial.* 62, 4 handelt es sich um die Frage, an wen Gott sich in Genesis 1, 26 wendet, wenn er sagt: „Lasset uns Menschen machen.“ Er lehnt jene Auffassung ab, die sagt, daß es die Engel oder die Elemente seien. Und dann führt er fort: ἀλλὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῷ ὄντι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς προβληθὲν γέννημα πρὸ πάντων τῶν ποιημάτων συνῆν τῷ πατρί καὶ τούτῳ ὁ πατήρ προσομιλεῖ ὡς ὁ λόγος διὰ Σαλομῶνος ἐδήλωσεν, ὅτι ἀρχὴ πρὸ πάντων τῶν ποιημάτων τοῦτ' αὐτὸ καὶ γέννημα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγεγέννητο, ὃ σοφία διὰ Σαλομῶνος καλεῖται. (Vielmehr war der, welcher in der Tat vom Vater ausgegangen und vor allen geschöpfen erzeugt war, bei dem Vater, und zu ihm spricht der Vater, wie der Logos durch Salomo offenbart hat; denn eben er ist es, welcher der Anfang vor allen Geschöpfen war, vom Vater erzeugt worden war und von Salomo Weisheit genannt wird.) Wieder begegnen wir der schon gekannten Formel: „das vom Vater gezeugte Kind“, das vor der Schöpfung beim Vater war. Neu ist hier der Begriff ἀρχή, der aus dem schon öfters erwähnten Text Prov. 8, 22 stammt.

#### d) Tatian

Während bei Justin der Begriff 'Sohn' an entscheidender Stelle steht, ist bei seinem Schüler Tatian der Logosbegriff im Mittelpunkt. In *Oratio ad Graecos* 5 sagt er: Θεὸς ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ. τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν λόγου δύναμιν παρειλήφαμεν. Man kann diese Worte folgendermaßen paraphrasieren: bei Gott ist die Rede von einer ἀρχή, und in dieser ἀρχή Gottes sehen wir eine δύναμις λογική; ein Ausdruck, den Tatian weiter auch selber gebraucht. Er sagt ferner: θελήματι δὲ τῆς ἀπλότητος αὐτοῦ προπηδᾷ λόγος· ὁ δὲ λόγος οὐ κατὰ κενοῦ χωρήσας ἔργον πρωτότοκον τοῦ πατρὸς γίγνεται, τοῦτον ἴσμεν τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἀρχήν. Das Wort, das dem Willen des einen Gottes, der einzig ist, entspringt, bleibt nicht erfolglos. Er wird das erstgeborene Werk des Vaters; er ist die ἀρχή des Kosmos. Vgl. Kol. 1, 15: ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα. Wenn der Logos einmal mit der ἀρχή identifiziert wird, dann liegt die Interpretation von ἐν ἀρχῇ = ἐν λόγῳ = ἐν Χριστῷ nahe.

#### e) Theophilus von Antiochien

In *Ad Autolycum* I, 7 sagt Theophilus, daß Gott alles durch seinen Logos geschaffen hat, und er zitiert dabei zwei Texte; den ersten aus Psalm 32, der auf Genesis 1 verweist; der zweite ist dem Buch

der Sprüche entnommen, welches großen Einfluß auf diese Betrachtungen gehabt hat. ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς σοφίας ἐποίησε τὰ πάντα· “τῷ γὰρ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ ἐστερεώθησαν οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν”. (Ps. 32, 6). κρατίστη ἐστὶν ἡ σοφία αὐτοῦ· “ὁ θεὸς τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐθεμελίωσε τὴν γῆν, ἡτοίμασε δὲ οὐρανοὺς φρονήσει ...” (Prov. 3, 19ff.) (Durch sein Wort und seine Weisheit hat Gott alles erschaffen, denn ‘durch sein Wort sind die Himmel gefestigt worden, und durch seinen Geist all ihre Kraft’. Ganz gewaltig ist seine Weisheit. ‘Durch seine Weisheit hat Gott die Erde grundgelegt, er hat die Himmel zugerichtet durch seine Klugheit. Übers. J. Leitl, B.K.V. 1913).

Gott hat diesen Logos, der in seinem Inneren wohnt, erzeugt, indem er ihn mit seiner Weisheit ‘ausspie’ (dieses Wort ist Psalm 44, 2 entnommen, was in der Septuagintaübersetzung lautet: Ἐξηρεύσατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν. Siehe Evans, o. c., S. 266) vor der ganzen Schöpfung. Der Text lautet: Ἐχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευξάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων (*Ad Autol.* II, 10) (Es zeugte also Gott mit seiner Weisheit sein Wort, das er in seinem eigenen Innern beschossen trug, indem er es vor allen Dingen aus sich hervortreten ließ (Buchstäblich: “ausspie”)).

Diesen Logos, der nun hervorgetreten ist (λόγος προφορικός), hatte Gott als Helfer bei dem, was von ihm zustande gebracht wurde, und durch ihn hat er alles geschaffen. Dieser Logos wird ἀρχή genannt, weil er herrscht (ἄρχει) und Meister ist über alles, was von ihm geschaffen worden ist. Dieser Logos, der Gottes Geist und Anfang, Weisheit und Kraft des Allerhöchsten ist, ist niedergefahren und hat den Propheten erzählt, was bei der Schöpfung und danach geschehen ist. Die Propheten waren dabei ja nicht anwesend, wohl jedoch die σοφία, wie sich aus Proverbia 8, 27–29 ergibt.

Der Text: τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔσχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένων, καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν. οὗτος λέγεται ἀρχή, ὅτι ἄρχει καὶ κυριεύει πάντων τῶν δι’ αὐτοῦ δεδημιουργημένων. οὗτος οὖν, ὢν πνεῦμα θεοῦ καὶ ἀρχή καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου, κατήρχετο εἰς τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ δι’ αὐτῶν ἐλάλει τὰ περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων. οὐ γὰρ ἦσαν οἱ προφῆται ὅτε ὁ κόσμος ἐγένετο, ἀλλ’ ἡ σοφία ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ οὖσα καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἅγιος αὐτοῦ ὁ αἰὲ συμπαρὼν αὐτῷ. διὸ δὴ καὶ διὰ Σολομῶνος προφήτου οὕτως λέγει ... (Dieses Wort nun gebrauchte er als Mittel aller

seiner Schöpfungen und er schuf alles durch dasselbe. Dies Wort heißt 'der Anfang' weil es das Prinzip und der Herr aller Dinge ist, die durch dasselbe sind geschaffen worden. Dies Wort also, das ist der Geist Gottes, das Prinzip (aller Dinge), die Weisheit und Kraft des Allerhöchsten, war es, daß auf die Propheten herabkam und durch sie die Offenbarungen über die Erschaffung der Welt und übrigen Dinge redete. Denn die Propheten waren noch nicht, als die Welt entstand, aber die Weisheit Gottes, die in ihm ist, und das hl. Wort Gottes, das ewig bei ihm wohnt, waren schon. Eben aus diesem Grunde spricht es auch durch den Propheten Salomo ...). Bemerkenswert ist der Gebrauch von ἔσχεν in dieser Passage gegenüber dem ἔχων in der vorhergehenden. Letzteres wird beim λόγος ἐνδιάθετος gesagt und ist ein Ausdruck der ewigen Verbundenheit des Logos mit Gott; in ἔσχεν wird ein Anfang zum Ausdruck gebracht. Man spürt hier die zwei Aspekte, die am Logos zu unterscheiden sind und die man auch in *Ad Autolycum* II, 22 findet. Theophilus spricht dort von dem λόγος ἐνδιάθετος und sagt, daß dieser immer ἐν καρδίᾳ θεοῦ (im Herz Gottes) sei; und dann fährt er fort: ὁπότε δὲ ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἐβουλεύσατο, τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἐγέννησεν προφορικόν, πρωτότοκον πάσης κτίσεως, (Kol. 1, 15), οὐ κενωθείς αὐτὸς τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλὰ λόγον γεννήσας καὶ τῷ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ διὰ παντὸς ὁμιλῶν. ὅθεν διδάσκουσιν ἡμᾶς αἱ ἅγιοι γραφαὶ καὶ πάντες οἱ πνευματοφόροι, ἐξ ὧν Ἰωάννης λέγει· "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν." δεικνὺς ὅτι ἐν πρώτοις μόνος ἦν ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος. ἔπειτα λέγει· "Καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος· πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδέν." (Als aber Gott die Dinge alle, die er zu erschaffen beschlossen hatte, erschaffen wollte, da erzeugte er dieses Wort als ausgesprochenes, den Erstgeborenen jeglicher Kreatur, nicht, daß er dieses Wortes verlustig wurde, sondern so, daß er es zeugte und in Ewigkeit mit seinen Worten beisammen blieb. Darauf fußt auch die Lehre der hl. Schriften und der mit dem Geist Gottes erfüllten Männer, von denen einer, Johannes, sagt: 'Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott', womit er ausspricht, daß im Anfang nur Gott und das Wort in ihm da war. Hierauf sagte er: 'Und Gott war das Wort; alles ist durch ihn gemacht, und ohne ihn ist nichts gemacht'.). In II, 10 zitiert Theophilus daraufhin den Text von Genesis 1, 1 und sagt, daß hier nicht ohne Grund von einer ἀρχῇ (und von einer ποίησις) gesprochen wird. Mit ἐν ἀρχῇ wird nämlich ἐν τῷ λόγῳ gemeint. Hier finden wir also zum erstenmal bestätigt, daß mit

‘Anfang’ der Logos gemeint ist. Der Text lautet: ὅπως οὖν ὁ τῷ ὄντι θεὸς διὰ ἔργων νοηθῇ, καὶ ὅτι ἐν τῷ λόγῳ αὐτοῦ ὁ θεὸς πεποίηκεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, ἔφη· “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.” (Damit also der wahre Gott aus seinen Werken erkannt werde, und auch, daß Gott in seinem Worte Himmel und Erde und alles was darinnen ist, erschaffen habe, sagte er: ‘Im Anfang schuf Gott Himmel und Erde’.).

#### f) Athenagoras

Wahrscheinlich einige Jahre bevor Theophilus seine Bücher schrieb, wandte Athenagoras sich in seinem ‘Bittgesuch für die Christen’ an Marc Aurel und seinen Sohn Commodus (etwa 177). Er sagt, daß der Sohn Gottes der Logos des Vaters sei ἐν ιδέα καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ. (Leg. 10,2) Bei ἐν ιδέα kann man an Philip. 2, 6 denken ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων; in Theophilus’ Terminologie ist es der λόγος ἐνδιάθετος. Der λόγος ἐν ἐνεργείᾳ steht dem λόγος προφορικός gleich. Athenagoras gibt selber folgende Erklärung: πρὸς αὐτὸν γὰρ καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἐνὸς ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. (Leg. 10,2) (“Nach ihm und durch ihn ist alles geschaffen, denn der Vater und der Sohn sind eins”) In der ersten Hälfte dieses Satzes wird der λόγος προφορικός genannt, während sofort hinzugefügt wird, daß der Logos eins mit Gott ist, was anderswo mit λόγος ἐνδιάθετος bezeichnet wird. Athenagoras verweist dann noch auf τὸ προφητικὸν πνεῦμα, das in Prov. 8, 22 sagt: Κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ. Dasselbe hat Justin schon in *Dial.* 62, 4 getan.

#### g) Tertullian

Mit noch mehr Deutlichkeit als bei Theophilus findet man die Erklärung von ἐν ἀρχῇ im Sinne von ἐν λόγῳ oder ἐν σοφίᾳ bei Tertullian, und zwar in seiner Schrift *Adversus Hermogenem* (etwa 205).

Hermogenes verteidigte die These, daß neben Gott ein anderes Prinzip angenommen werden müsse, das genau so ewig wie Gott ist. Wie oben schon erwähnt, zeigte sich, daß Basilius und Ambrosius gegen diese Auffassung Einspruch erhoben. Tertullian setzt all seinen Scharfsinn ein, um eine derartige Auffassung, bei der Gott eine Materie nötig haben würde, um die Welt zu gestalten, zu widerlegen.

In Kap. 18, 1 sagt er: „Wenn Gott eine Materie hätte, mit der er arbeitete, so wäre das nicht jene der Philosophen, sondern jene,

von der die Propheten sprechen, nämlich die Weisheit.“ Diese nennt er *materia materiarium*, d. h. Materie im höchsten Grade. Er verweist dann auf Prov. 8, 22: *Dominus condidit me initium viarum suarum in opera sua*. Weiterhin spielt er auf Joh. 1, 1 an: *si vero sophia eadem dei sermo est, sine quo factum est nihil ...* (18, 3).

Ferner (Kap. 19) berichtet er, daß Hermogenes auch Genesis 1, 1 als Argument für seine These einer ewigen Materie zitiert. Genesis spricht nämlich von einem Anfang, in dem Gott Himmel und Erde schuf. Mit diesem ‘Anfang’ nun ist laut Hermogenes die Materie gemeint.<sup>48</sup> Tertullian findet dies eine Art des Interpretierens, welche unzulässig ist; es ist eine Verdrehung der einfachen Worte, wenn man, wie Ketzer das zu tun pflegen, ihnen eine Bedeutung abpreßt, die sie nicht haben.<sup>49</sup> Er sagt, daß er den Worten ihre eigene Bedeutung geben wolle; *principium* nun bedeutet ‘Anfang’ und nicht ‘Substanz’.

Nachdem er diese These ausgeführt hat, fügt er hinzu, daß noch eine andere Interpretation von *principium* möglich sei, die nicht abwegig ist. Die griechische ἀρχή kann ja auch die Bedeutung von Herrschaft haben,<sup>50</sup> eine Bedeutung, die schon von Theophilus in Ad Autolyicum II, 10 erwähnt wurde. „Aber“, so fährt Tertullian fort, „auch wenn das griechische Wort nichts anderes als *principium* und *principium* nichts anderes als Anfang bedeuten würde, so müssen wir immer noch jene (sc. die Weisheit) als Anfang erkennen, die sagt: ‚Der Herr schuf mich im Hinblick auf seine Werke‘ (Prov. 8, 22). Wenn ja durch Gottes Weisheit alles geworden ist, so hat Gott Himmel und Erde *in principio* machend, das heißt im Anfang, sie in seiner Weisheit gemacht.<sup>51</sup> Hier wird

<sup>48</sup> *Nam et ipsum principium in quo fecit deus et caelum et terram aliquid volunt fuisse quasi substantivum et corpulentum quod in materiam interpretari possit (Adversus Hermogenem 19, 1; S. 36 10–13, ed. Wsz., Stromata patristica et mediaevalia V, Ultraieci/Antverpiae, Spectrum 1956).* Dieser Text Tertullians wurde ins Englische übersetzt von J.H. Waszink und reichlich mit erläuternden Anmerkungen versehen in: *Ancient Christian Writers*, Vol. XXIV, Westminster, 1956.

<sup>49</sup> *Itaque occasiones sibi sumpsit quorundam verborum, ut haereticis fere mos est inspicere quaeque torquere (ibid. S. 36, 8–10 Wsz.).*

<sup>50</sup> *Possum et aliter principium interpretari, non ab re tamen; nam et in Graeco principii vocabulum, quod est arche, non tantum ordinativum sed et potestativum capit principatum, unde et archontes dicunt principes et magistratus (19,5; S. 37, 12–16 Wsz.).*

<sup>51</sup> *Sed ut nihil aliud significet Graeca vox quam principium et principium nihil aliud capiat quam initium, habemus etiam illam initium agnoscere quae dicit: „Dominus condidit me in opera sua.“ Si enim per sophiam dei omnia facta sunt, et caelum ergo et terram deus faciens in principio, id est initio, in sophia sua fecit (20, 1; S. 37, 19–24 Wsz.).*

nun endlich auf Grund von Prov. 8, 22, in der die Weisheit sich ἀρχή nennt, ἐν ἀρχῇ von Genesis 1, 1 interpretiert als ἐν σοφίᾳ. Bemerkenswert ist, daß der Text von 'Proverbia' nur halb zitiert wird und daß namentlich das Wort *initium*, um das sich alles dreht, fortgelassen wird. Man muß allerdings feststellen, daß in 18, 1 der Text schon vollständig zitiert wurde, aber das beseitigt das Merkwürdige im betreffenden Text nicht.<sup>52</sup>

In *Adversus Praxean* 5ff. handelt Tertullian ausführlich vom Sohn. In dieser Darlegung findet man alle vorhergenannten Elemente wieder. Es genügt jedoch hier, auf die schon vorhergenannte Edition mit Kommentar von Evans zu weisen.

#### h) Origenes<sup>53</sup>

Origenes fängt seine erste Predigt über 'Genesis' folgendermaßen an: „Im Anfang schuf Gott Himmel und Erde. Was ist der Anfang von allem anders als unser Herr und aller Erlöser, Christus Jesus, Erstgeborener der ganzen Schöpfung. In diesem Anfang, d. h. in seinem Wort hat Gott Himmel und Erde geschaffen, so wie auch der Evangelist Johannes im Anfang seines Evangeliums sagt: ‚Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort. Dies war im Anfang bei Gott. Alle Dinge sind durch ihn geworden.‘ Er (Moses) spricht hier also nicht von einem Anfang in der Zeit, sondern wenn er sagt ‚Im Anfang‘, so meint er damit, daß in dem Erlöser Himmel und Erde geworden seien und alles, was weiterhin geworden ist.“<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Eine ähnliche Erscheinung in ähnlichem Zusammenhang findet man bei Calcidius' Kommentar zu Platons *Timaeus*. Dieser führt verschiedene Bedeutungen von *initium* auf und gibt deren Beispiele aus der Bibel. Als letzte Bedeutung gibt er folgende: *Est tamen unum rerum omnium initium, de quo Salomon in Proverbiis „Creavit me“, inquit, „deus progressionis suae semitam ...“ aperte indicans praeunte divina sapientia caelum terramque facta eandemque divinam sapientiam fore universitatis primordium* (Kap. 276; S. 281, 6–11, ed. J.H. Waszink, *Corpus Platonium Medii Aevi*, Plato Latinus IV. Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus, Londonii–Leidae, 1962). Hier wird auch in der Belegstelle das Wort, worum es sich handelt, *initium*, ausgelassen. Vgl. J.C.M. van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources. A Chapter in the History of Platonism*, Leiden, 1965<sup>2</sup>, S. 57ff.

<sup>53</sup> Für Clemens von Alexandrien siehe S.R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism*, Oxford, 1971, S. 208.

<sup>54</sup> „*In principio creavit deus caelum et terram.*“ *Quod est omnium principium nisi dominus noster et salvator omnium Christus Jesus, „primogenitus omnis creaturae“* (Kol. 1, 15)? *In hoc ergo principio, hoc est in verbo suo deus caelum et terram fecit, sicut et evangelista Joannes in initio evangelii sui ait dicens: „In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud deum. Omnia*

Beim ersten Hinsehen befremdet eine derartige Erklärung. Aber nach dem Vorherigen klingt sie vertraut. Sie wird von Acacius als typisch für Origenes erwähnt. Er fügt nämlich der oben (S. Anm. 30) zitierten Darlegung über ἐν ἀρχῇ hinzu: 'Ο δὲ Ὠριγένης τὸ „ἐν σοφίᾳ“, τούτεστιν τῷ Υἱῷ.

Wie sich schon zeigte, begegnet man dieser Interpretation bei Basilius nicht, jedoch bei Ambrosius. Das steht wahrscheinlich im Zusammenhang mit Basilius' Ablehnung allegorischer Interpretationen in seinem Hexaëmeron-Kommentar (z. B. III, 9). Bei Augustin findet man diese Interpretation auch öfters, z. B. in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I, 2. Die Manichäer, die eine ewige Materie als Prinzip des Bösen annehmen, fechten das *In principio* von Genesis 1, 1 an. Sie behaupten: Was ist das für ein Anfang? Wenn man es als Anfang in der Zeit versteht, dann frage man sich, was Gott tat, ehe er Himmel und Erde schuf; und wie kam Gott auf einmal zur Schöpfungstätigkeit? Augustin antwortet: 'Genesis' spricht hier nicht von einem Anfang in der Zeit, sondern von Christus, dem Wort, das bei dem Vater war, durch den und in dem alles geworden ist.<sup>55</sup>

Den modernen Leser mutet die Art des Interpretierens, wie sie hier beschrieben ist, oft gekünstelt an. Man muß sich jedoch überlegen, daß im Altertum die Leser dem geschriebenen Text anders gegenüberstanden als wir. In einem unlängst erschienenen Artikel hat H Dörrie das eindringlich beschrieben. Er sagt darin: „Der antike Leser ist viel weniger als sein moderner Nachfahre

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*per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil*“ (Joh. 1, 1–3). *Non ergo hic temporale aliquod principium dicit; sed in principio id est in Salvatore factum esse dicit caelum et terram et omnia quae facta sunt* (P.G. 12, 145 C). Dieser Text ist nur in der Übersetzung von Rufin überliefert. Leider sind Origenes' Kommentare zur 'Genesis' fast ganz verlorengegangen. In der Passage des Calcidius-Textes, auf die wir in Anmerkung 52 verwiesen, besitzen wir möglicherweise einige Reste davon. Siehe ferner Migne, P.G. 12, 15ff.

<sup>55</sup> *Primum ergo librum Veteris Testamenti, qui inscribitur Genesis, sic solent Manichaei reprehendere. Quod scriptum est, „In principio fecit deus caelum et terram“, quærent, in quo principio; et dicunt: si in principio aliquo temporis fecit deus caelum et terram, quid agebat antequam faceret caelum et terram? et quid ei subito placuit facere, quod nunquam antea fecerat per tempora aeterna? His confitemur, deum in principio fecisse caelum et terram, non in principio temporis, sed in Christo, cum Verbum esset apud Patrem, per quod facta et in quo facta sunt omnia* (vgl. Joh. 1, 1 und 3), Migne, P.L. 34, 174; siehe auch: *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus*, liber 2 (P.L. 34, 222) und: *De Genesi ad litteram*, I 1, 2 (P.L. 34, 247). In *Confessiones* XI, 9 sagt er noch: *In hoc principio fecisti, deus, caelum et terram, in verbo tuo, in filio tuo, in virtute tua, in sapientia tua, in veritate tua, miro modo dicens et miro modo faciens.*

darin geschult und dazu angehalten, dem, was er liest, einschichtige Information zu entnehmen. Er darf, ja soll, wo er die Möglichkeit dazu sieht, seinen Text συμβολικῶς verstehen. Er darf ihm entnehmen, was ihn angeht—und wer den antiken Stil des Zitierens, aber auch den Stil der Scholiasten untersucht, gewinnt einen deutlichen Eindruck, wie weit hier die Rechte eines Lesers gingen—, sehr im Unterschied zu der für uns verbindlichen Beschränkung, nichts in Texte hinein zu tragen, von dem nicht mit Sicherheit feststeht, daß der Autor es sagen wollte.“<sup>56</sup>

### C. Appendix: Die einleitenden Worte von Basilius' 'In Hexaëmeron'

Eine Einleitung wird oft erst nach Vollendung des Werkes geschrieben: sie ist daher öfters erst ganz und gar zu verstehen, nachdem man dieses Werk gelesen hat. Das gilt auch für die einleitenden Worte von Basilius' erster Predigt *In Hexaëmeron*. Nachdem er das Thema seiner Predigt, den Text von Genesis 1, 1, angegeben hat, beginnt Basilius folgendermaßen: Πρέπουσα ἀρχὴ τῷ περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου συστάσεως μέλλοντι διηγεῖσθαι ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν ὁρωμένων διακοσμήσεως προθεῖναι τοῦ λόγου. Wörtlich übersetzt: „Es ist ein passender Anfang für den, welcher über die Zusammensetzung des Kosmos eine Erörterung geben will, einen Anfang der Ordnung der sichtbaren Dinge vorauszusetzen.“ Man kann das Wort ἀρχή auch noch etwas nachdrücklicher folgendermaßen übersetzen: „vorauszusetzen, daß es einen Anfang in der Ordnung der sichtbaren Welt gegeben hat“ oder „vorauszusetzen, daß die sichtbare Welt einen Anfang gehabt hat“. Wenn man nun gesehen hat, was für einen wichtigen Platz der Begriff ἀρχή in Basilius' Erörterung einnimmt, dann wird die Bedeutung dieser Äußerung verständlich. Basilius hat hier offenbar zu allererst ἐν ἀρχῇ in Genesis 1, 1 im Auge und sagt dann, um es ganz einfach zu sagen: es ist ein passender Anfang, mit dem Wort 'Anfang' zu beginnen.

Es ist nun interessant zu sehen, wie im Altertum und in der modernen Zeit dieser Satz übersetzt worden ist. Eustathius' Übersetzung (zirka 400) lautet: *Conveniens exordium de mundi compositione narraturus adsumpsit decorationem gestorum operum, sui faciens sermonis*

<sup>56</sup> Zum Problem der Ambivalenz in der antiken Literatur, *Antike und Abendland* 16 (1970), S. 92. Man könnte ja von Polyvalenz sprechen.

*initium*.<sup>57</sup> Für ihn ist offenbar διακόσμησις der wichtigste Begriff, nicht ἀρχή; er verbindet, dem Anschein nach, ἀρχήν mit τοῦ λόγου und er macht ἀρχήν τοῦ λόγου zum Objekt von προθεῖναι (*sui faciens sermonis exordium*), welche Worte in seiner Übersetzung wie eine nichtssagende Hinzufügung gleichsam daneben stehen. Wie er τῆς διακοσμήσεως dann noch konstruieren kann, bleibt unklar.

S. Giet übersetzt in der Sources Chrétiennes-Ausgabe (1950) folgendermaßen «*Il convient du prime abord à qui va décrire l'organisation du monde, de mentionner en tête de son discours, le principe de l'ordre que règne dans le monde visible*». Seiner Ansicht nach wollte Basilius in diesem ersten Satz die Aufmerksamkeit auf „das Prinzip der Ordnung in der sichtbaren Welt“ lenken, das ist Gott. Man muß hier betonen, daß es dann merkwürdig ist, das bei ἀρχήν der Artikel fehlt. Andererseits könnte man zugunsten Giets Übersetzung den zweiten Satz dieser Predigt anführen, der lautet: οὐρανοῦ γὰρ καὶ γῆς ποίησις παραδίδοσθαι μέλλει, οὐκ αὐτομάτως συνερχεῖσθαι, ὥς τινες ἐφαντάσθησαν, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν λαβοῦσα. Anscheinend wird hier als Erklärung der vorherigen Aussprache (γάρ) Gottes Aktivität einem zufälligen Zusammenreffen der Elemente gegenübergestellt. Betrachten wir jedoch diesen zweiten Text näher, so stellt sich heraus, daß auch dieser ein Element enthält, das von Giet nicht beachtet worden ist. Wörtlich sagt Basilius: „Hier muß nämlich eine Schöpfung von Himmel und Erde erzählt werden, die nicht, wie man gemeint hat, das Resultat des Zufalls ist, sondern die von Gott ihre αἰτία erhalten hat.“ Was bedeuten nun die Worte: ihre αἰτία von Gott erhalten haben? Giet übersetzt: «*elle a sa cause en Dieu*».<sup>58</sup> Diese Übersetzung will sagen, daß Gott die Ursache ist, und sie würde die Übersetzung des ersten Satzes bestätigen. Aber ist λαβεῖν τὴν αἰτίαν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ so zu interpretieren, daß Gott selber die Ursache ist? Oder sind Gott und αἰτία hier zwei verschiedene Realitäten? Letztere Annahme erscheint unvermeidlich. Nun

<sup>57</sup> Eustathius, Ancienne version latine des neuf homélies sur l'Hexaéméron de Basile de Césarée. Edition critique avec prolegomènes et tables par E. Amand de Mendieta et S.Y. Rudberg, Berlin, 1958 (T.U. 66).

<sup>58</sup> Die ganze Übersetzung Giets lautet: «*Car l'origine du ciel et de la terre ne doit pas être présentée comme la rencontre spontanée des éléments, ainsi que certains se le sont imaginé: elle a sa cause en Dieu.*» Hier werden die Partizipien prädikativ aufgefaßt; dann hätte jedoch etwas Ähnliches dort stehen müssen, wie οὐχ ὥς αὐτομάτως συνερχεῖσθαι. Außerdem ist μέλλει und παραδίδοσθαι nicht richtig übersetzt.

zeigte sich oben schon, daß αἰτία und ἀρχή oft dieselbe Bedeutung haben. Basilius kann also mit αἰτία dasselbe meinen wie ἀρχήν im ersten Satz; er bringt also zum Ausdruck, daß die Schöpfung ihre ἀρχή von Gott empfangen hat.

Diese ἀρχή ist also das zweite Prinzip; Gott ist das erste. Wenn diese ἀρχή als Λόγος interpretiert wird, kommt man Plotin nahe, der die Welt zustande kommen läßt mittels eines Demiurgen, der νοῦς ist; und Plotin widersetzt sich, genau wie Basilius, mit Nachdruck einer Theorie, die das Zustandekommen des Alls auf den Zufall zurückführt.<sup>59</sup>

### *Postscriptum*

Dieser Aufsatz wurde im Jahre 1971 geschrieben und auf ihre Bitte an die Redaktion von Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt geschickt. Dezember 1975 trafen die Druckfahne ein. Juni 1977 kam die brieflichte Mitteilung, dass die Veröffentlichung des bezüglichen Bandes sich noch etwas weiter zu verzögern schien. Es freut mich, dass der Artikel jetzt in diesem Band erscheinen kann.

Inzwischen sind verschiedene Studien über die hier behandelte Materie erschienen. Ich beschränke mich zu den Titeln.

G. May, Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der Creatio ex nihilo, Berlin 1978 (Englische übersetzung, Edinburgh 1994).

E. Früchtel, 'Ἀρχή und das erste Buch des Johanneskommentars des Origenes', *Studia Patristica* 14 (= TU 117), Berlin 1975.

M. Alexandre, Le commencement du livre Genèse I-V: la version grecque de la Septante et sa réception, Paris 1988, p. 65 ss.

Für Philon

D. T. Runia, Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato, *Philosophia Antiqua* 44, Leiden 1986<sup>2</sup>.

D. T. Runia, Philo in Early Christian Literature, Assen, 1993.

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<sup>59</sup> Siehe J. Pépin, Théologie cosmique, S. 87, der nach *Enn.* V,9,3, 25–26 und III,2,1, 1–3 verweist.

\* Die einleitende Worte von Basilius' 'In Hexaëmeron' wurden weiter erklärt in meinem Beitrag zur Festschrift H. Dörrie (p. 116–123 in this volume).

\*\* Für die Übersetzung aus dem Niederländischen ins Deutsche danke ich Frau C.S. Rijkers-Krantz herzlich.

## ST. AMBROSE'S INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MATTER

During the last decennia the works of St. Ambrose have been enjoying a growing interest. One of the fruits of this interest is the translation of the *Exameron*, the *De Paradiso* and the *De Cain et Abel* by J.J. Savage in the series "The Fathers of the Church" (New York, 1961). Unfortunately this translation has failed to stand the test, as was shown in a review elsewhere in this periodical (pp. 246–248). In the present paper it is my intention to discuss the most important texts of St. Ambrose which refer to matter; this discussion will give an opportunity for some further incidental remarks concerning Savage's translation.

The first sentence of the *Exameron* already gives abundant food for reflection. St. Ambrose immediately plunges *in medias res* and begins his sermon as follows: *Tantumne opinionis adsumpsisse homines, ut aliqui eorum tria principia constituerent omnium, deum et exemplar et materiam, sicut Plato discipulique eius, et ea incorrupta et increata ac sine initio esse adseverarent deumque non tamquam creatorem materiae, sed tamquam artificem ad exemplar, hoc est ideam intendentem fecisse mundum de materia, quam vocant ὕλην, quae gignendi causas rebus omnibus dedisse adseratur ...* (p. 3, 2–9 Sch.). Though our attention is mainly turned to what St. Ambrose says on matter, some observations on the translation of the entire sentence may precede. Savage translates: "To such an extent have men's opinions varied that some, like Plato and his pupils, have established three principles for all things: that is, God, Idea, and Matter. The same philosophers hold that these principles are uncreated, incorruptible, and without a beginning. They maintain that God, acting not as a creator of matter but as a craftsman who reproduced a model, that is, an Idea, made the world out of matter. This matter, which they call ὕλη, is considered to have given the power of creation to all things" (p. 3). There is an [206] inconsistency in this translation, in so far as *exemplar* is first rendered by "Idea", and a little further on *ad exemplar, hoc est ideam* by "a model, that is, an Idea". It would have been better to render the first *exemplar* by "model" as well; at any rate, the use of the indefinite article in the second case cannot be defended, for St. Ambrose speaks about one single Idea, just as he speaks about

one God and one Matter. The translation of *intendentem* is not correct either, for the words "who reproduced" fail to bring out the connection of this participle with *deum*. It would be better to maintain the participle construction and translate as follows: "that God, acting not as a creator of matter but as a craftsman, contemplating the model, that is, the Idea, made the world out of matter".

Matter, St. Ambrose states, is said to have furnished the *causas gignendi* to all things. Savage translates these two words by "the power of creation". It is generally known that matter is regarded by Aristotle as a cause, but only in so far as the ὕλη offers the material out of which things come to existence;<sup>1</sup> it is a passive, not an active cause. Therefore, if the ὕλη is called αἰτία γενέσεως, this does not imply that it possesses "the power of creation";<sup>2</sup> therefore, we must certainly prefer the literal translation "causes of becoming". St. Ambrose, however, understands matter as an active principle, not in the sense of the well-known dualistic interpretation, in which matter is the principle of evil and as such opposed to the good, but rather as a power which makes the divine principle at least partly superfluous. This will become evident from the following remarkable texts.

In *Exam.* I 2, 5 St. Ambrose continues his sermon as follows: *Unde divino spiritu praevidens sanctus Moyses hos hominum errores fore et iam forte coepisse in exordio sermonis sui sic ait: "in principio fecit deus caelum et terram", initium rerum, auctorem mundi, [207] creationem materiae comprehendens, ut deum cognosceres ante initium mundi esse vel ipsum esse initium universorum, sicut in evangelio dei filius dicentibus: "tu quis es?" respondit: "initium quod et loquor vobis", et ipsum dedisse gignendi rebus initium et ipsum esse creatorem mundi, non idea quadam duce imitatore materiae, ex qua non ad arbitrium suum, sed ad speciem propositam sua opera conformaret* (p. 4, 17–5, 3 Sch.). In this quotation the words *et ipsum dedisse gignendi rebus omnibus initium* attract our attention and remind us of what was said just now about matter: *quae gignendi causas rebus omnibus dedisse adseratur*. That which, according to *Genesis*, is the work of God, is the work of matter in the opinion of

<sup>1</sup> See *Phys.* II 3, 194b 23: αἴτιον λέγεται τὸ ἐξ οὗ γίνεται τι ἐνυπάρχοντος.

<sup>2</sup> It is a well-known fact that Plato does not actually use the term ὕλη. However, an identification of the χώρα and the ἀνάγκη of the *Timaeus* with the ὕλη of Aristotle has been generally accepted since the age of the latter. On this subject cp. F. Solmsen, 'Aristotle's Word for 'Matter'', in: *Didascaliae. Studies in Honor of Anselm M. Albareda*, 395–408; J.C.M. van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources*, Leiden, Brill, 1959, pp. 31 ss.

Plato, as it is explained by St. Ambrose. But then God does what has already been done by matter, and so He imitates matter: hence *imitatorem materiae*. Moreover, in creating the world, God could not work according to his will, but He had to conform it to an example proposed to Him (not "a self-proposed model", as Savage translates). It is remarkable that in *imitatorem materiae* the verb *imitari* does not have the Idea as its object. This interpretation of Ambroses's words is confirmed by a similar text in the same sermon, where he says that Moses did not want to make God "a pupil of matter", who by contemplating it would fashion the world. Still referring to the first words of *Genesis* he states: *non ille (sc. Moyses), ut atomorum concursione mundus coiret, serum atque otiosum expectavit negotium neque discipulum quendam materiae, quam contemplando mundum posset effingere, sed auctorem deum exprimendum putavit* (p. 6, 12–16 Sch.). In the translation of this passage Savage makes *neque ... effingere* dependent on *expectavit*, just like J.E. Niederhuber in his German translation in the "Bibliothek der Kirchenväter" (Kempten und München, 1914). However, the second principal sentence begins after *negotium*; its meaning is: "Moses thought that he had to describe, not a *discipulus materiae*, but a *deus auctor*". The interpunction in Migne, where a comma is put after *negotium* is, therefore, preferable to that of Schenkl.

In the introduction of his sermon on the second day of creation St. Ambrose sums up the main points of his statements concerning the first day. We read there: *fecit igitur deus caelum et terram et ea quasi auctor esse praecepit, non tamquam figurae inventor, sed [208] tamquam operator naturae, nam quomodo sibi conveniunt operatoria impassibilis dei virtus et passibilis materiae natura tamquam altera ab altera quo indiguerint mutuantes?* (p. 41, 16–20 Sch.). In the light of the preceding texts St. Ambrose's meaning is clear: he declares that it is not correct to understand God and matter as two active causes, one filling up the shortcomings of the other. Though grammatically *operatoria* belongs to *dei virtus* only, it could be added to matter as well.—Savage makes a curious mistake, rendering *et ea ... praecepit* by "and those things which He as Author has ordained to exist", as if St. Ambrose had written *quae* or *ea quae*. *Ea*, of course, resumes *caelum et terram* and the text means: "and as a Creator He ordained these things to exist".—After this Ambrose elaborates the consequences of the supposition that matter was uncreated; this text can be considered as a further explanation of the words *non tamquam figurae*

*inventor* in the preceding sentence: *nam si increata materia, videtur ergo deo creandae potestas materiae defuisse et ab ea operationi subiacentia mutuatus: si vero inconposita, mirum admodum (est) coaeternam deo materiem decorem sibi non potuisse conferre, quae substantiam non a creatore acceperit, sed sine tempore ipsa possederit, plus ergo invenit operator omnium quam contulit: invenit materiem, in qua posset operari, contulit autem figuram, quae decorem inventis rebus adferret* (p. 41, 20–42, 5 Sch.). In other words: in that case matter would have already done the main part of the work, and God would be a *inventor* rather than a *creator*. And why should matter have been unable to finish this work all by itself?

God, then, is the Creator of matter. But why in fact do we speak about matter on occasion of Genesis 1, 1? We only read that God made heaven and earth. However, the Jewish and Christian thinkers, who, like Philo and Origen, studied Greek philosophy as well as the Bible, were, of course, looking for points of contact between these two sources of knowledge. They found a curious correspondence between the attributes of earth in Gen. 1, 1, which was said to be *invisibilis et incompta*, and of matter, which is always said to be ἀνείδεος, ἄμορφος, ἄποιος.<sup>3</sup> St. Ambrose discusses [209] this text of Genesis in his second sermon on the first creation day (*Exam.* I 7, 25). He accepts as self-evident the identification of earth and matter, and begins his comments with a discussion on *erat*. He asks: *Quid est "erat"?* And he answers: *ne forte in infinitum et sine principio extendant opinionem suam et dicant ecce quia materia, id est ὕλη, sicut philosophi dicunt, etiam secundum scripturam divinam non habuit initium. verum hoc dicentibus respondebis quia scriptum est: "erat autem Cain operarius terrae" ... Desinant ergo de verbo quaestionem movere, cum praesertim praemiserit Moyses quia "fecit deus terram". erat ergo ex quo facta est* (p. 23, 10–19 Sch.). In this passage the words *ne forte* cause a difficulty. One is inclined to translate, as Savage does: "Perhaps (Holy Scripture has *erat*, in order) that men may not extend their hypothesis to refer to something without end and without beginning and say: See how matter ... did not have a beginning according even to the divine Scriptures" (p. 26). However, this interpretation cannot possibly be correct, for the imperfect tense in *erat*, far from containing a warning against the supposition that matter always was, rather favours it. The meaning of the text must be a

<sup>3</sup> For the relevant texts see the reference in index III of my *Calcidius on Matter*: list of Greek terms.

different one. St. Ambrose asks: "What does 'was' mean?". And then, thinking of those who consider matter to be uncreated, he warns: "Let them refrain from sticking eternally<sup>4</sup> to their opinion and from saying (which perhaps they will do): 'see how, even according to Holy Scripture, matter did not have a beginning'". He then quotes some texts of the Bible in which *erat* does not mean 'to be without a beginning' either, and concludes: "Let them cease, therefore, to cling to the sense of a verb, especially since Moses has already asserted that God made the earth. It 'was', therefore, from the moment (not 'from the fact', as Savage translates) that it was made".—"And, moreover", St. Ambrose continues, "where could matter have been, if it was eternal?" He then discusses several possibilities, all of which turn out to be impossible. Finally, he says: *ubi ergo erat ὕλη, nisi forte dicatur quadam dementi intentione quia in deo erat? ergo deus invisibilis naturae atque inviolabilis, qui "lucem habitat inaccessibilem", incomprehensibilis et purissimus* [210] *spiritus, locus erat materiae mundialis, et erat in deo mundi portio, cum de hoc mundo non sit mens servolorum eius, sicut habemus scriptum: "de hoc mundo non sunt, sicut et ego non sum de mundo"* (p. 24, 12–19 Sch.). Savage's translation of this passage contains several mistakes. In the first sentence he omits *dementi* and *in*; in consequence we are given the following meaningless rendering: "Are you to suppose by some notion that it was God?" (p. 27). In the second sentence he again overlooks *in*, which renders his translation completely incorrect: "And was God a part of this world" instead of "and was a part of this world in God".—By *portio mundi* St Ambrose, of course, means the earth; the other *portio* is heaven. This statement raises another question: what is the meaning of heaven, if earth is interpreted as the equivalent of matter?

In Greek philosophy an equivalent of heaven can hardly be found. However, an answer to our question is given by Calcidius in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, ch. 277–278. It is almost certain that this passage is the translation of a fragment of Origen's commentary on Genesis.<sup>5</sup> Here the question is raised which heaven and which earth Holy Scripture means. Some understand heaven and earth literally, but this supposition cannot be correct, since this heaven and this earth were not made in the beginning but on the

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation of *in infinitum et sine principio* seems preferable to that of Savage.

<sup>5</sup> See my *Calcidius on Matter*, pp. 60 ss.

second day: *Quod autem caelum quamve terram Scriptura loquatur, intelligendum. Qui tumultuario contenti sunt intellectu, caelum hoc quod videmus et terram qua subvehimur dici putant. Porro qui altius indagantur, negant hoc caelum ab initio factum, sed secundo die* (p. 281, 16–19 Wsz.). In the following chapter Calcidius first discusses the opinion of Philo, who declares that the heaven and earth mentioned in *Gen.* I 1 are immaterial and intelligible essences, viz., the ideas: *Quod ergo illud caelum prius quam cetera deus condidit quamve terram? Philo carentes corpore atque intellegibiles essentias fore censet, ideas et exemplaria tam siccae istius terrae quam soliditatis* (p. 282, 7–9 Wsz.). Here earth as well as heaven belong to the world of ideas: they are the ideas of this earth and of the firmament.<sup>6</sup> Philo sees his opinion confirmed by the fact that in [211] *Genesis* the creation of man, too, is mentioned twice. In this context this can only mean that Holy Scripture refers first to intelligible man, that is, the prototype of man, and then to the *homo corporeus*. Calcidius continues as follows: *Alii non ita, sed scientem prophetam duas esse species rerum omnium, alteram intellegibilem, alteram sensibilem, eas virtutes quae utramque naturam circumplexae contineant, caelum et terram cognominasse, caelum quidem incorpoream naturam, terram vero, quae substantia est corporum, quam Graeci hylen vocant. Astipulantur his quae sequuntur, “terra autem erat invisibilis et informis”, hoc est silva corporea, vetus mundi substantia, etc.* (p. 282, 11–17 Wsz.). Then, having explained the other translations of the *Genesis* text, Calcidius states: *Quod si facta est a deo silva corporea quondam informis, quam Scriptura terram vocat, non est, opinor, desperandum incorporei quoque generis fore intellegibilem silvam, quae caeli nomine sit nuncupata* (p. 283, 8–11 Wsz.). This means that in the beginning God created an amount, not only of corporeal, but also of intelligible, incorporeal matter. Now such a theory was indeed defended by Origen. In *De princ.* II 9, 1, discussing the text of *Sap.* 11, 20 ἀλλὰ πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ διέταξας, he writes: *porro autem sicut et scriptura dicit “numero et mensura universa” condidit deus, et idcirco ‘numerus’ quidem recte aptabitur rationabilibus creaturis vel mentibus, ut tantae sint, quantae a providentia dei et dispensari et regi et contineri possint. ‘Mensura’ vero materiae corporali consequenter aptabitur; quam utique tantam a deo creatam esse credendum est, quantam sibi sciret ad ornatum mundi posse sufficere. Haec ergo sunt quae in initio, id est ante omnia, a deo creata esse aestimandum est. Quod quidem etiam in illo initio, quod*

<sup>6</sup> O.c., p. 62. See also *De officio mundi* 6, 29: Πρώτον οὖν ὁ ποιῶν ἐποίησεν οὐρανὸν ἀσώματον καὶ ἀόρατον.

*Moyses latentius introducit, indicari putamus, cum dicit: "In principio fecit deus caelum et terram".* Remembering this opinion we are better able to understand the following text of St. Ambrose, which follows immediately after the words of I 2, 7 discussed above: *advertit enim vir plenus prudentiae quod visibilium atque invisibilium substantiam et causas rerum mens sola divina contineat, non ut philosophi disputant validiorem atomorum complexionem perseverantiae iugis praestare causam* (p. 6, 16–20 Sch.). Since this text belongs to the interpretation of Gen. 1, 1, *invisibilium substantia* seems to be the rendering of *caelum*, just as *visibilium substantia* indicates matter. (See in the Calcidian text [212] *quae substantia est corporum* and *vetus mundi substantia*.) But then we are not far from the *incorporea natura* and the *silva intellegibilis* of Calcidius and Origen. However, this interpretation seems to clash with *Exam.* I 5, 19, where St. Ambrose says with regard to the same words of *Genesis*: *et factus est ergo mundus et coepit esse qui non erat; verbum autem dei in principio erat et erat semper. sed etiam angeli, dominationes et potestates etsi aliquando coeperunt, erant tamen iam, quando hic mundus est factus. "omnia" namque creata et "condita sunt, visibilia et invisibilia"* (p. 15, 21–26 Sch. Cp. St. Basil, *Hexaem.* 13A–B). Here *caelum et terram* clearly refers to the *visibilia*; the *invisibilia* are said to have been created before. The qualification of heaven and earth as *portiones mundi* in the sentence quoted above must also be explained in this way.

How are we to explain this difference of views? If I am not mistaken, St. Ambrose is confusing two different conceptions. Some understand heaven and earth literally, as we saw already and as we shall also see St. Basil doing; others interpret 'earth' as 'matter', and then it is obvious that they also interpret 'heaven' in a different way. Concerning earth St. Ambrose's position is clear: without hesitation he identifies it with matter; concerning heaven, however, he has, as it seems, not found any problem; thus, on the one side, we come across texts which seem to suggest a literal interpretation ('heaven' = firmament), whereas, on the other side, we also find some reminiscences of Origen's interpretation ('heaven' = *invisibilium substantia*). Since we know that St. Ambrose used Origen as a source for his sermons on *Genesis*—St. Jerome even reproached him with this, though afterwards he modified his judgment<sup>7</sup>—we must take into consideration the possibility that the texts we have

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<sup>7</sup> *Epist.* 84, 7 (P.L. 22, 749) and *Epist.* 112, 20 (P.L. 22, 929).

just discussed are derived from Origen's commentary. It is, however, by no means impossible that Ambrose himself was not fully alive to the implications of bringing in these texts.—In rendering *mens sola divina contineat* by "were contained in the divine mind" Savage makes a serious mistake: the created things are not *in* the divine mind but they are contained *by* the divine mind, and by the divine mind alone, as St. Ambrose states explicitly, not by the conjunction of atoms.—About this theory [213] of the *complexio atomorum* he still says: *iudicavit quod telam araneae texerent qui sic minuta et insubstantiva principia caelo ac terris darent, quae ut fortuito coniungerentur ita fortuito ac temere dissolverentur, nisi in sui gubernatoris divina virtute constarent. nec inmerito gubernatorem nesciunt qui non novērunt deum, per quem omnia reguntur et gubernantur. sequamur ergo eum qui et auctorem novit et gubernatorem nec vanis abducamur opinionibus* (p. 6, 20–7, 5 Sch.). The first words of this quotation raise the question whether S. Ambrose thought that Moses was acquainted with the theory of atoms. The (negative) answer is to be found in *Exam.* I 2,5 quoted above: *Unde divino spiritu praevidens sanctus Moyses hos hominum errores fore et iam forte coepisse, etc.*—This text on the theory of atoms will serve us in the discussion of the sources of Ambrose to which we now proceed.

It is a well-known fact that in his homilies on the Creation Ambrose largely depends on St. Basil's *Hexaëmeron*. On the theory of atoms we read, for example, in *Hexaëm.* 8A–B: οἱ δὲ ἄτομα καὶ ἀμερῇ σώματα, καὶ ὄγκους καὶ πόρους συνέχειν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὁρατῶν ἐφαντάσθησαν. Νῦν μὲν γὰρ συνιόντων ἀλλήλοις τῶν ἀμερῶν σωμάτων, νῦν δὲ μετασυγκρινομένων, τὰς γενέσεις καὶ τὰς φθορὰς ἐπιγίνεσθαι· καὶ τῶν διαρκεστέρων σωμάτων τὴν ἰσχυροτέραν τῶν ἀτόμων ἀντεμπλοκὴν τῆς διαμονῆς τὴν αἰτίαν παρέχειν. "Ὅντως ἰσὶ τὸν ἀράχνης ὑφαίνουσιν οἱ ταῦτα γράφοντες, οἱ οὕτω λεπτὰς καὶ ἀνυποστάτους ἀρχὰς οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης ὑποτιθέμενοι. Οὐ γὰρ ἤδεσαν εἰπεῖν, 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. Διὰ τοῦτο ἀκυβέρνητα καὶ ἀδιοίκητα εἶναι τὰ σύμπαντα, ὥς ἂν τύχη φερόμενα, ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνοικουσίας αὐτοῖς ἀθεότητος ἡπατήθησαν. "Ὅπερ ἵνα μὴ πάθωμεν ἡμεῖς, ὁ τὴν κοσμοποιίαν συγγράφων εὐθύς ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ῥήμασι τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν διάνοιαν ἡμῶν κατεφώτισεν, εἰπὼν, 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός. (Ed. St. Giet, Sources Chrétienues, p. 92, 94). This passage provides us with the explanation of the rather enigmatical *validiorem* in Ambrose's text, and it shows the origin of the comparison of the cob-web and the idea of the ruler.

In general St. Ambrose follows his example, be it fairly freely. Concerning matter, however, he radically deviates from his authority. Basil will have none of the idea that the words ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος should contain an indication of matter. [214] People who say that, he states, are "falsifiers of the truth" (*Hexaëm.* 29C). According to him, the terms 'heaven' and 'earth' design 'the world'; since they are the extreme parts of the world, all things are comprised by them: Ἐκ δύο τῶν ἄκρων τοῦ παντός τὴν ὑπαρξιν παρηνίξατο ... Πάντως δὲ καὶ εἴ τι τούτων μέσον, συναπεγενήθη τοῖς πέρασιν (20A). "They should not" St. Basil continues, "raise questions about the essence of the earth, and look for a nature without quality and without property by itself": μὴ πολυπραγμαίνειν αὐτῆς τὴν οὐσίαν ἥτις ποτέ ἐστι, μηδὲ κατατρίβεσθαι τοῖς λογισμοῖς αὐτὸ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἐκζητοῦντας, μηδὲ ζητεῖν τινα φύσιν ἔρημον ποιότητων, ἅποιον ὑπάρχουσιν τῷ ἑαυτῆς λόγῳ (21A). These kinds of abstractions lead to the elimination of everything: Εἰς οὐδὲν γὰρ καταλήξεις, ἐκάστην τῶν ἐνυπαρχουσῶν αὐτῇ ποιότητων ὑπεξαιρεῖσθαι τῷ λόγῳ πειρώμενος (*ibid.*). Thus St. Basil understands the terms 'heaven' and 'earth' in their most obvious sense. With reference to ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος he notes that the same could be said of heaven, since in the beginning heaven was not illuminated by sun and moon, and not crowned with the stars (29B). He further argues that an uncreated matter cannot exist, and that God, in creating the world, has at once generated matter and form: Ὁ δὲ Θεὸς πρὶν τι τῶν νῦν ὁρωμένων γενέσθαι, εἰς νοῦν βαλλόμενος καὶ ὁρμήσας ἀγαγεῖν εἰς γένεσιν τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ὁμοῦ τε ἐνόησεν ὁποῖόν τινα χρὴ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι, καὶ τῷ εἶδει αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀρμόζουσαν ὕλην συναπεγέννησε. Καὶ οὐρανῷ μὲν ἀφώρισε τὴν οὐρανῷ πρέπουσαν φύσιν· τῷ δὲ τῆς γῆς σχήματι τὴν οἰκείαν αὐτῇ καὶ ὀφειλομένην οὐσίαν ὑπέβαλε (33A). St. Ambrose certainly knew these texts, and so we are permitted to infer that he wittingly departed from the interpretation of his authority. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that, though St. Ambrose often follows St. Basil, he is by no means a slavish imitator without an opinion of his own.

If St. Basil did not influence him here, who did? In examining this question we have to be extremely careful. Perhaps it is impossible to assign a special author as Ambrose's only source: anyone who reads the first chapters of the first sermon, which we have partly treated above, will get the impression of a compilation of doxographical data. Probably St. Ambrose has used a doxography

as his source for the questions under discussion, but his [215] interpretation of matter as an active cause is almost certainly a contribution of his own.

One author must be mentioned, on whom Ambrose is certainly not dependent here, *viz.*, Plotinus. Several authors, among whom Courcelle and Hadot have to be mentioned in the first place,<sup>8</sup> have succeeded in tracing an influence of Plotinus on St. Ambrose on several points. However, the concept of matter which St. Ambrose discusses here is not that of Plotinus. It would have been difficult, indeed, to use the Plotinian concept of matter in an interpretation of *Genesis*, since what this text requires is the Aristotelian τὸ ἐξ οὗ, and the ὕλη of Plotinus is very far from this concept.<sup>9</sup>

We thus arrive at the conclusion that, when St. Ambrose, consciously deviating from St. Basil's opinion, supposed Gen. 1, 1 to refer to matter, he could only use the traditional form of this concept, which he found in doxographical literature. Possibly Origen's commentary on *Genesis* rendered him some service. However, the interpretation of the activity of matter seems to be entirely his own work.

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<sup>8</sup> See P. Courcelle, 'L'humanisme chrétien de saint Ambroise', *Orpheus* 9 (1962), 21-34.

<sup>9</sup> The ὕλη of Plotinus does not contribute in any positive way to the existence of things. Cp. the excellent paper of F.P. Hager, 'Die Materie und das Böse im antiken Platonismus' in *Museum Helveticum* 19 (1962), 73-103, especially pp. 85 *ss.*

## SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON ST. AMBROSE'S CONCEPT OF MATTER

In a former paper (*Vig. Chr.* 16 (1962), 205–215) some observations were made on St. Ambrose's concept of matter, as it finds expression in his sermons on Genesis 1, 1. The conclusions of that article can be summarized as follows: 1. In contrast with his dependence on St. Basil in almost the whole *Exameron*, St. Ambrose goes his own way in his discussion of matter. He does not understand the term 'earth' literally but allegorically, as an indication of matter. 2. In this respect he follows the trend of the exegesis which originated from the first contact between the explanation of the Bible and Greek philosophy, especially in the School of Alexandria. 3. The interpretation of matter as an active cause, even to the extent that God is said to be 'an imitator or a disciple of matter', seems to be a contribution by St. Ambrose himself. As to the last conclusion, a correction has to be made.

In his *De natura boni*, ch. 18, St. Augustine, treating on the origin of evil, says: *neque enim vel illa materies, quam antiqui hylen dixerunt, malum dicenda est. Non eam dico, quam Manichaeus hylen appellat dementissima vanitate, nesciens quid loquatur, formatricem corporum: unde recte illi dictum est quod alterum deum inducat: nemo enim formare et creare corpora nisi deus potest: neque enim creantur nisi cum eis modus et species et ordo subsistit*. Clearly Augustine is arguing here against a similar idea of matter as an active cause, for the concept of God as a *discipulus* or *imitator materiae* is nothing but a further elaboration of the idea of matter as a *formatrix corporum* and a *alter deus*. Thus in both St. Augustine and St. Ambrose we find the same *reductio ad absurdum* of a strictly dualistic system—the formulation given by St. Ambrose only represents a further development of the argument: if matter is an active and a form-giving cause, then God, *for being dependent on His material*, can indeed be described as an imitator or a disciple of matter. Without any doubt Ambrose is also arguing against Manicheism, which system in a different context is attacked by him in the following way: *non agnoscis opus esse te Christi? Manibus suis ut legimus te ille formavit: et tu, Manichee, alterum tibi asciscis auctorem* (*Exam.* III 8, 32; p. 80, 15–18 Sch.).

As for the argument of both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine,

Tertullian's *Adversus Hermogenem* presents some revealing texts. Hermogenes was adherent of a strictly dualistic interpretation of Plato's doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Arguing against this dualism Tertullian states: *Ita Hermogenes duos deos infert: materiam parem deo infert* (4, 5; p. 20, 14–15 Waszink), and *neque enim potest non et materia auctrix omnium deputari, de qua universitas consistit* (5, 1; p. 21, 7–8; Cf. 6, 2; p. 22, 19: *auctrix cum deo*, and 7, 4; p. 23, 27: *auctricem auctori*). One is inclined to think that Augustine in his *De natura boni* is directly dependent on these texts.

Further on Tertullian says: *Atquin etiam praeponit illam deo et deum potius subicit materiae, cum vult eum de materia cuncta fecisse* (8, 1; p. 24, 7–8), and *Porro si de aliqua operatus est (sc. deus), necesse est ab ea ipsa acceperit et consilium et tractatum dispositionis, ut viam intellegentiae et scientiae* (17, 2; p. 34, 3–5). This idea seems to be expressed by St. Ambrose's *discipulus* and *imitator materiae*. By these two concepts, which seem to be Ambrose's own contribution, the *reductio ad absurdum* is followed out to the limit.

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<sup>1</sup> On this way of interpretation see the paper of F.P. Hager, 'Die Materie und das Böse im antiken Platonismus', *Museum Helveticum* 19 (1962), 73–103.

IN THE BEGINNING<sup>1</sup>  
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PATRISTIC  
INTERPRETATIONS OF GENESIS 1, 1

The basic problem of Greek philosophy is that of the ἀρχή: only by the ἀρχαί can the world exist and be grasped. This problem is unknown to Scripture.<sup>2</sup> It is true that *Genesis* speaks of the origin of the world, but this origin is the Creator: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. However, Jewish thinkers of the Hellenistic period and Christian thinkers, always attempting to explain the Bible in Greek philosophical terms, found in the Septuagint translation of these words of *Genesis* two points of contact with that philosophy. First, they saw the principle of Matter in the term “earth”, especially because of the immediately subsequent words: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation has been studied in a former paper.<sup>4</sup> The second point of contact was found in the term ἀρχή. Although the Septuagint used it in a neutral sense, thinkers steeped in Greek philosophy could scarcely avoid connecting it with the doctrine of the ἀρχαί. [106] This was so much easier, since the Greek mind links the meaning of the two terms much more closely than the English words “beginning” and “origin”, and, consequently, passes more easily from the temporal sense of ἀρχή to that of “cause”.

The first chapter of *Genesis* is one of the most discussed texts in early Christian literature.<sup>5</sup> Among the works on this subject St.

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<sup>1</sup> W.K.C. Guthrie borrowed these opening words from the Bible for the title of his book on “some Greek views on the origins of life and the early state of man” (London, Methuen, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> Cp. R. Bultmann, *Das Urchristentum im Rahmen der antiken Religionen*, München. Rowohlt, 1962, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> This Septuagint translation of the *tohu-wa-bohu* was suggested by the description of the “mother and receptacle” of the visible world in Plato’s *Timaeus* 52A: ἀόρατον εἶδος τι καὶ ἄμορφον. Cp. J. Daniélou, *Philon d’Alexandrie*, Paris, Arthème Fayard, 1958, p. 101; J. Horowitz, *Untersuchungen über Philons und Platons Lehr der Schöpfung*, Marburg, 1900, p. 118–121. To speak of “prime matter” in connection with the *Timaeus* (Daniélou, p. 101) is formally incorrect. Cp. F. Solmsen, *Aristotle’s Word for “Matter”*, in *Didascaliae. Studies in Honour of Anselm M. Albareda*, ed. by Sesto Prete, New York, Rosenthal, 1961, p. 395–408.

<sup>4</sup> *Vig. Christ.*, 16 (1962), p. 205–215; see p. 49–58 in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> A most interesting contribution to the study of this subject is the recent

Basil's nine homilies on the *Hexaëmeron*, the narrative of the "Six Days" of creation, justly hold a place of honour.<sup>6</sup> In these sermons the Cappadocian intends to give a Christian idea of the world. Though they were given as Lenten sermons, even within Holy Week, they do not have a character of Easter sermons, for in fact they are a word for word commentary on Genesis 1, 1–26. One word gives occasion to painting the beauty of nature or the miracles of the cosmos, another to a discussion on a problem of natural science or of philosophy. The discussion of ἀρχή belongs to the latter. About twenty years later, in 386 A.D.,<sup>7</sup> St. Ambrose delivered similar sermons during Holy Week. They should not be considered as Easter sermons either, even though this feast is mentioned several times. Savage<sup>8</sup> describes them as "a free adaptation" of St. Basil's work "in a Latin dress, filled up with reminiscences from Ambrose's wide reading in the Latin classics". In the following pages the character of this free adaptation will come to the fore.

The starting point of this study is St. Ambrose's discussion of the term *principium* in the first sermon on the "Six Days" of creation (*Exameron* I 4, 12–16). He opens the discussion by stating that on the authority of Scripture there is a beginning, and then [107] lists seven senses of *principium*.<sup>9</sup> "The term "beginning" has reference to time (1), to number (2) or to foundation (3). Through Scripture we also know that one can speak of a beginning of conversion or of depravation (4). There is, moreover, a beginning of craftsmanship (5), that is that craftsmanship itself, which is the source of the achievements of the several craftsmen. Further, there is a beginning of good works, *viz.*, the highest end (6) as acts of charity have

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book by Gregory T. Armstrong, *Die Genesis in der Alten Kirche. Die drei Kirchenväter* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Biblischen Hermeneutik 4), Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1962, in which the relevant interpretations by Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian are fully discussed.

<sup>6</sup> J. Quasten, *Patrology*, Vol. III, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature*, Utrecht, Spectrum, 1960, p. 216–217.

<sup>7</sup> Cp. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin*. Paris, E. de Boccard, 1950, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> Saint Ambrose, *Hexameron. Paradise, and Cain and Abel*, transl. by J.J. Savage, New York, Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1961, p. vi.

<sup>9</sup> It is much to be regretted that Savage's translation is not reliable. Cp. *Vig. Christ.*, 16 (1962), p. 246 ss. Some places, where, to the best of my knowledge, he fails to render the precise meaning of the original, will be listed below.

a 'beginning' in the delight taken by God in what we do;<sup>10</sup> for we are especially urged (by God) to help our fellow men. Finally, there is a divine power (7), to which the term 'beginning' is applied."

In this enumeration, the text of which is given below along with its parallel by St. Basil, the first three meanings of the term are joined by *aut.* while the other four seem to form a kind of appendix. The idea that this was done on purpose is more than just a first impression. St. Ambrose only applies the first three meanings to the text of *Genesis*. The other meanings, with the exception of the seventh, are discussed no more. After a long digression on the third one, he only speaks—in I 4, 15—of a "mystical beginning"; clearly this explains the seventh sense of *principium*, which was called earlier "a divine power". This paragraph will be treated later at the end of this paper.

Having discussed the mystical beginning, St. Ambrose states that *in principio* can also be understood in a non-temporal sense. Just as the beginning of a journey is not yet the journey and the beginning of a house not yet the house, so the beginning of time is not yet time but something before time.<sup>11</sup> Here the word "also" (*etiam*) is worthy of notice. It gives the impression that in what Ambrose enunciated till now "Beginning" was taken in a temporal [108] sense. This cannot be said of the text which is now under discussion, but it may perhaps furnish an indication concerning the structure of its source.

The *Hexaëmeron* of St. Basil also gives a list of the various meanings of "beginning" (ἀρχή). At first sight there is a great resemblance between the Ambrosian and the Basilian text, but on closer consideration the latter appears to be more logically constructed. St. Basil states that in Genesis 1, 1 ἀρχή has a temporal sense, not that of "the first concerning origin" (οὐ κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν). Undoubtedly, here are the first two meanings of *principium* in St. Ambrose's list. St. Basil continues: "beginning" can also mean "the first movement", "the basic reality", "the craftsmanship" and

<sup>10</sup> Savage translates incorrectly: "There is also a beginning to good works. This consists in a most commendable purpose or end, as, for example, acts of charity have their source *in the deeds which are done to do honor to God*, for we are especially urged to come to the aid of our fellow men" (p. 11)).

<sup>11</sup> Savage's translation, again, deviates from the original: "We can also understand that the statement, "In the beginning ..." has reference *to a period* (?) " (p. 15).

"the aim or end". He intends to elaborate and to deepen the temporal sense of ἀρχή, which becomes even more obvious when he applies these four senses of ἀρχή,—they show a remarkable resemblance with the four ἀρχαί or αἰτία<sup>12</sup> of Aristotle—to the *Genesis* text. Having stated that "in order to find a beginning, one has to go back from the present to the past, till one finally reaches the first day of the origin of the world",<sup>13</sup> he adds: Εὐρήσεις γὰρ οὕτως, πόθεν τῷ χρόνῳ ἢ πρώτῃ κίνησις, ἔπειτα, ὅτι καὶ οἰονεὶ θεμέλιοί τινες καὶ κρηπίδες προκατεβλήθησαν ὁ [109] οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ. St. Basil, therefore, considers the four Aristotelian causes as further explanations of ἀρχή temporal.

In this context it is worthy of mention that Giet,<sup>14</sup> following J. Courtonne (*Saint Basile et l'Hellénisme*, Paris, 1934, p. 38), remarks

<sup>12</sup> After a long enumeration of different meanings of ἀρχή Aristotle states, *Metaph.* 1013a16s.: ἰσαχῶς δὲ καὶ τὰ αἰτία λέγεται· πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἰτία ἀρχαί.—To each of these four definitions of ἀρχή St. Basil adds a scriptural text with the term ἀρχή in a similar sense, thus showing that Scripture has the same wealth of meanings of that term. The great care with which the agreement between Scripture and Greek philosophy is pointed out should be noted Cp. also this striking comment by Origen on the first words of St. John's Gospel (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος): οὐ μόνον Ἕλληνες πολλὰ φασιν σημαίνόμενα εἶναι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς προσηγορίας· ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἰ τις τηρήσαι συνάγων πάντοθεν τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάζων βούλοιο κατανοεῖν ἐν ἐκάστῳ τόπῳ τῶν γραφῶν ἐπὶ τίνος τέτακται, εὐρήσει καὶ κατὰ τὸν θεῖον λόγον τὸ πολύσημον τῆς φωνῆς· ἡ μὲν γὰρ τις ὡς μεταβάσεως, αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ὡς ὁδοῦ καὶ μήκους· ὅπερ δηλοῦται ἐκ τοῦ "Ἀρχὴ ὁδοῦ ἀγαθῆς τὸ ποιεῖν δίκαια" (*In Joh.* 16, 90–91. *Origines Werke* IV p. 20, 1–7, ed. Preuschen).

<sup>13</sup> *Hexaëmeron* 16B: Τοσαυταχῶς οὖν λεγομένης τῆς ἀρχῆς σκόπει εἰ μὴ πᾶσι τοῖς σημαينوμένοις ἡ παρούσα φωνὴ ἐφαρμόσει. Καὶ γὰρ ἀφ' οὗ χρόνου ἦρξατο ἡ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου σύστασις, δυνατόν σοι μαθεῖν, ἐάν γε ἐκ τοῦ παρόντος εἰς τὸ κατόπιν ἀναποδίζων, φιλονεικῆσης εὐρεῖν τὴν πρώτην ἡμέραν τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως (ed. Giet, *Sources Chrétiennes*, 1949, p. 110).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Giet considers Aristotle's long series of definitions of ἀρχή *Metaph.* 1012b34ss., to be the mediate source of St. Basil. I would prefer to state a reference to the well-known passage in *Metaph.* 983a26ss., where the four causes are mentioned: τὰ δ' αἰτία λέγεται τετραχῶς, ὧν μίαν μὲν αἰτίαν φαμέν εἶναι τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ..., ἑτέραν δὲ τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον, τρίτην δὲ ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως, τετάρτην δὲ τὴν ἀντικειμένην αἰτίαν ταύτῃ τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα καὶ τάχαθόν (τέλος γὰρ γενέσεως καὶ κινήσεως πάσης τοῦτ' ἐστίν).

The mutual influence of the terms ἀρχή and αἰτία (or αἰτιον) explains why St. Basil speaks of four ἀρχαί instead of four αἰτία. His description of the ἀρχαί, however, betrays the influence of Aristotle's longer series of ἀρχαί in *Metaph.* 1012b34: Ἀρχὴ λέγεται ἡ μὲν ὅθεν ἂν τις τοῦ πράγματος κινηθεῖ πρώτη, οἷον τοῦ μήκους καὶ ὁδοῦ ἐντεῦθεν μὲν αὕτη ἀρχή, ἐξ ἐναντίας δὲ ἑτέρα. Likewise the ὕλη became "foundation" under the influence of the definition in *Metaph.* (*ibid.*): ἡ δὲ ὅθεν πρώτην γίνεται ἐνυπάρχοντος, οἷον ὡς πλοίου τρόπις καὶ οἰκίας θεμέλιος and so on. A study on the development of these two concepts and their mutual influence would be welcome.

that in the case of the last two causes (formal and final) the interpretation of the ἐν ἀρχῇ of Genesis is, in his opinion, rather artificial. He might as well have added the first cause (the *causa efficiens*), especially because of the preposition ἐν. It is only with regard to the material cause that it can be said that the world was created *in it*, according to the Platonic view that the world was made ἐν ὕλῃ. (This is probably why St. Ambrose only connects the material cause, not the other three, with the sentence of Genesis.) However, this kind of interpretation shows a misapprehension of St. Basil. To him God's creation of the world ἐν ἀρχῇ means that the world has an ἀρχή. This term, he states, must be understood in a temporal sense, which, in its turn includes causality, *viz.*, the four causes of Aristotle. And, in this connection, the four causes cannot be differentiated.

And only when it is borne in mind that he is speaking of a temporal ἀρχή, one understands how he proceeds with: "Ἡ τάχα διὰ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον καὶ ἄχρονον τῆς δημιουργίας εἴρηται τὸ, 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν, [110] ἐπειδὴ ἀμέρες τι καὶ ἀδιάστατον ἡ ἀρχή. This means: "Or the term 'beginning' is not an indication of time but of the indivisible moment of the origin of things". And he illustrates this by the examples: "just as the beginning of a journey is not yet the journey and the beginning of a house is not yet the house".<sup>15</sup>

Placing the text of St. Basil and St. Ambrose side by side, we can more easily discuss their agreements and divergences of detail.

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<sup>15</sup> The choice of these examples may be suggested by the words

St. Basil, *Hexaëmeron* 13C–17A  
(Ed. Giet, Sources Chrétiennes)

St. Ambrose, *Exameron*, I, 4, 12–16  
(Ed. Schenkl, C.S.E.L.)

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|---|--|
| <p>(1) ἐν ἀρχῇ ταύτῃ τῇ κατὰ χρόνον.</p> <p>(2) Οὐ γὰρ δὴ κατὰ πρεσβυγενειαν πάντων τῶν γενομένων προέχειν αὐτὸν μαρτυρῶν λέγει ἐν ἀρχῇ γεγονέναι, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τὰ ἄόρατα καὶ νοούμενα τῶν ὁρατῶν τούτων καὶ αἰσθήσει ληπτῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑπάρξεως διηγεῖται.</p> <p>(4) Λέγεται μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ πρώτη κίνησις· ὥς, Ἄρχῃ ὁδοῦ ἀγαθῆς τὸ ποιεῖν δίκαια. Ἄπὸ γὰρ τῶν δικαίων πράξεων πρῶτον κινούμεθα πρὸς τὸν μακάριον βίον.</p> <p>(3) Λέγεται δὲ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὅθεν γίνεται τι, τοῦ ἐνυπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ὥς ἐπὶ οἰκίας θεμέλιος, καὶ ἐπὶ πλοίου ἡ τρόπις, καθὼ εἴρηται, Ἄρχῃ σοφίας, φόβος Κυρίου. Οἶον γὰρ κρηπὶς καὶ βάθρον πρὸς τὴν τελείωσιν ἡ εὐλάβεια.</p> <p>(5) Ἄρχῃ δὲ καὶ τῶν τεχνικῶν ἔργων ἡ τέχνη· ὥς ἡ σοφία Βεσελεὴλ τοῦ περὶ τὴν σκηνὴν κόσμου.</p> <p>(6) Ἄρχῃ δὲ πράξεων πολλάκις καὶ τὸ εὖχρηστον τέλος τῶν γινομένων· ὥς τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης ἡ παρὰ Θεοῦ ἀποδοχὴ, καὶ πάσης τῆς κατ' ἀρετὴν ἐνεργείας τὸ ἐν ἐπαγγελίᾳς ἀποκείμενον τέλος.</p> | <p>(1) <i>principium aut ad tempus refertur</i></p> <p>(2) <i>aut ad numerum</i></p> <p>(3) <i>aut ad fundamentum, quomodo in aedificanda domo initium fundamentum est.</i></p> <p>(4) <i>principium quoque et conversionis et depravationis dici posse scripturarum cognoscimus veritate.</i></p> <p>(5) <i>est et principium artis ars ipsa, ex qua artificum diversorum deinceps coepit operatio.</i></p> <p>(6) <i>est etiam principium bonorum operum finis optimus, ut misericordiae principium est deo placere quod facias; etenim ad conferendum hominibus subsidium maxime provocamur. [111]</i></p> <p>(7) <i>est etiam virtus divina, quae hac exprimitur adpellatione.</i></p> |
|---|--|

(ad 1) *ad tempus refertur, si velis dicere in quo tempore deus fecit caelum et terram, id est in exordio mundi, quando fieri coepit, sicut ait sapientia: "cum pararet caelos, cum illo eram".*

(ad 2) *ad numerum autem si referamus, ita convenit, ut accipias: in primis fecit caelum et terram, deinde colles regiones fines inhabitabiles vel sic: ante reliquas visibiles creaturas, diem noctem ligna fructifera animantium genera diversa, caelum et terram fecit.*

(ad 3) *si vero ad fundamentum referas, principium terrae fundamentum esse legisti dicente sapientia: "quando fortia faciebat fundamenta terrae, eram penes illum disponens". est etiam bonae principium disciplinae, sicut est illud: "initium sapientiae timor domini", quoniam qui timet dominum declinat errorem et ad virtutis semitam vias suas dirigit. nisi enim quis timuerit deum, non potest renuntiare peccato.*

The agreements of the two texts are striking, especially for the fifth and the sixth meanings. The others have already been discussed above. Attention, therefore, should be drawn to the differences. The different structures of the text as a whole have already been mentioned; it should be added that the mystical sense is lacking in St. Basil. But there is more. According to the latter, the second sense of ἀρχή is not applicable to Genesis 1, 1 (οὐ κατὰ πρεσβυγένιον), while St. Ambrose sees no hindrance to giving this meaning to *principium*. The reason for it is clear. St. Basil expresses that "heaven and earth" are not the first things; the invisible things were created before the visible. St. Ambrose speaks of the latter alone: *ante reliquas visibiles creaturas*.

This, in its turn, draws attention to the fact that the fourth sense in St. Basil's text is treated in the third place by St. Ambrose. [112] Again it is obvious why: of the four Aristotelian causes St. Ambrose elaborates only the second, the material cause, called *fundamentum*. Clearly he saw little advantage in applying the other three senses to the *Genesis* text.<sup>16</sup>

St. Ambrose rendered St. Basil's πρώτη κίνησις with *principium conversionis et depravationis*. This term *conversio* was probably suggested by the texts of the Bible, cited as illustrating this meaning of the word, while *depravatio* seems an addition of an antithetical concept, often found in Greek texts. Origen's use of the term μετάβασις, when he discusses the different meanings of ἀρχή,<sup>17</sup> possibly influenced the use of *conversio*. It is remarkable that one finds here the same Scriptural text as that found in St. Basil: Ἀρχὴ ὁδοῦ ἀγαθῆς τὸ ποιεῖν δίκαια (*Prov.* 16, 7).

As an example of the formal cause, called τέχνη (rendered in the Ambrosian text with *ars*), St Basil mentions the wisdom of Bezalel (ὥς ἡ σοφία Βεσελεήλ). About this Bezalel *Exodus* 31, 2 ss. states that God gave him *wisdom* in order to build the tabernacle. This text strongly influenced Alexandrine authors. It has, for instance, a central place in Philo's manifold discussions on Wisdom, Logos and Law, which are fundamental ideas of his system.<sup>18</sup> Their influence is still visible in the texts of both St. Basil and St. Ambrose: their examples from Scripture are largely derived from the book of *Wisdom of Solomon* and concern "wisdom".

In the next paragraph St. Basil applies the four Aristotelian ἀρχαί to the *Genesis* text. St. Ambrose, however, evolves the idea of *principium* in the sense of "foundation": *est enim bonae ... renuntiare peccato*. At first sight he seems to pass on to a subsequent meaning of *principium*. But on closer consideration it must be evident that he continues with the same: his example from Scripture is the same as that of St. Basil, while his explanation of this Scripture text points in the same direction: the fear of the Lord is said to be the "foundation" of a virtuous life.

<sup>16</sup> For the reason, see above, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup> See note 11.

<sup>18</sup> Cp. H.A. Wolfson, *Philo*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard Univ. Press, 1948<sup>2</sup>, Vol. I. p. 253 ss. and J. Daniélou, *Philon*, p. 153 ss. In *Leg. Alleg.* III 95 Philo says that Bezalel means ἐν σκιά θεοῦ, and that σκιά θεοῦ is the λόγος θεοῦ. The human and divine Logos are thus connected.

St. Ambrose then continues: *quod aequae etiam de illo possumus* [113] *accipere*: “*mensis hic initium mensuum erit vobis*”. In order not to lose the thread of the discussion, this should be disregarded for a moment, except for the observation that St. Ambrose, as appears from *quod aequae*, still speaks of *principium* in the sense of “foundation”. (Henceforth he uses *initium* instead of *principium*, inspired apparently by the word *initium* in the Scripture texts.) After this discussion and that of the *initium mysticum*, also to be set aside for the moment, St. Ambrose states that *initium* can also be understood in a non-temporal sense.

The texts of the two Fathers can now again be read side by side:

St. Basil, *Hexaëmeron* 16C

Ἡ τάχα διὰ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον καὶ ἄχρονον τῆς δημιουργίας εἴρηται τὸ, Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν, ἐπειδὴ ἀμφές τι καὶ ἀδιάστατον ἡ ἀρχή

Ὡς γὰρ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς ὁδοῦ οὐπω ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς οἰκίας οὐκ οἰκία, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοῦ χρόνου ἀρχὴ οὐπω χρόνος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον ... Ἵνα τοίνυν διδασθῶμεν ὁμοῦ τῇ βουλήσει τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀχρόνως συνυφεστάναι τὸν κόσμον, εἴρηται τὸ, Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν.

Ὅπερ ἕτεροι τῶν ἐρμηνευτῶν, σαφέστερον τὸν νοῦν ἐκδιδόντες, εἰρήκασιν, Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς, τουτέστιν, ἀθρόως καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ.

St. Ambrose, *Exameron* I 4, 16

*possumus etiam intellegere*: “*in principio fecit caelum et terram*”, *id est ante tempus*,

*sicut initium viae nondum via est et initium domus nondum domus.*

*denique alii dixerunt ἐν κεφαλαίῳ quasi in capite, quo significatur in brevi et in exiguo momento summa operationis inpleta.*

*sunt ergo et qui principium non pro tempore accipiant, sed ante tempus et κεφάλαιον vel caput, ut dicamus latine, quasi summam operis, quia rerum visibilium summa caelum et terram est.*

St. Ambrose evidently depends on St. Basil: the same examples are used; *in brevi et exiguo tempore* clearly renders τὸ ἀκαριαῖον; and he follows his model in mentioning the variant reading ἐν κεφαλαίῳ. But there are differences as well. Where St. Basil speaks of ἄχρονον, St. Ambrose says *ante tempus*, thus changing the meaning of the Greek by explicitly introducing the time element. Furthermore, St. Basil reads ἐν κεφαλαίῳ as confirmation of his "timeless" interpretation of ἀρχή, while St. Ambrose again gives the [114] interpretation of this ἐν κεφαλαίῳ as an independent argument. Hence: *sed ante tempus et κεφάλαιον vel caput*.

St. Ambrose's ill-arranged list of seven senses of *principium*, followed by his observation that this word can also have a non-temporal meaning, has its source in St. Basil, who framed it as follows:

- |   |  |                     |
|---|--|---------------------|
| I | 'Αρχή has a temporal sense                   | (= 1 in St Ambrose) |
|   | not κατὰ πρεσβυγένειαν                       | (= 2)               |
|   | This temporal sense includes:                |                     |
|   | a) πρώτη κίνησις ~ <i>causa efficiens</i>    | (= 4)               |
|   | b) ὅθεν γίνεται τι ~ <i>causa materialis</i> | (= 3)               |
|   | c) τέχνη ~ <i>causa formalis</i>             | (= 5)               |
|   | d) τέλος ~ <i>causa finalis</i>              | (= 6)               |

II 'Αρχή can also have a non-temporal sense.

In the third chapter of his *De opificio mundi*, composed about 548 A.D., John Philoponus treats the question ποσαχῶς ἡ ἀρχή, καὶ ποῖα μὲν αὐτῆς σημαινόμενα παραληπτέον νῦν, ποῖα δὲ οὐ; (p. 7, 4 ff. Reichardt). This chapter is largely an adaptation of St. Basil's treatise on ἀρχή here discussed (Πολλὰ τὰ σημαινόμενα τῆς ἀρχῆς ὁ πολλὸς ἀπαριθμεῖται Βασίλειος). But Philoponus did not detect its structure either. In his opinion, St. Basil means "the first now" (τὸ πρῶτον νῦν) by ἡ κατὰ χρόνον ἀρχή, which is timeless and indivisible. He says: καὶ πρῶτόν γε πάντων τὴν κατὰ χρόνον ἀρχήν. λέγω δὲ νῦν κατὰ χρόνον οὐχ οὗ τῆς γενέσεως προηγείται χρόνος ὥς ἡμῶν ἐκάστου, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρῶτον τοῦ χρόνου νῦν, ἐν ᾧ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν προήγαγεν ὁ θεὸς παντὸς χρονικοῦ χωρὶς διαστήματος. And further on: οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡ τοῦ χρόνου ἀρχή, εἴτε ὅλου εἴτε μερικοῦ τινος, οἷον τῆς σήμερον, οὕτω χρόνος. And: Ἐπεὶ οὖν ἅμα οὐρανῷ συνέστηκε τὸν χρόνον ὁ θεός, ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ δὲ καὶ ἀμερεῖ τοῦ χρόνου

νῦν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ χρόνου ἀρχή, τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, ταύτην εἶναι φησι Βασίλειος κατὰ χρόνον ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν εἰρημένων γενέσεως, τὴν ἀκαριαίαν καὶ ἀδιάστατον (*ibid.*).

The author clearly means that St. Basil in *Hexaëm.* 16C explains τὴν κατὰ κρίνον ἀρχήν. However, the opening words, ἡ τὰχα show irrefutably that he proposes an alternative, which, on account of its timelessness, is precisely not an ἀρχὴ κατὰ χρόνον but ἀμερές τι καὶ ἀδιάστατον. [115]

After this one may now return to the digression St. Ambrose made on *principium* in the sense of "foundation". His text runs as follows: *Quod aequae etiam de illo possumus accipere: "mensis hic initium mensuum erit vobis", quamvis et de tempore istud accipiat, quia de pascha domini loquebatur, quod veris initio celebratur. In hoc ergo principio mensuum caelum et terram fecit, quod inde mundi capi oportebat exordium, ubi erat oportuna omnibus verna temperies. Unde et annus mundi imaginem nascentis expressit ... Ergo ut ostenderet scriptura veris tempora in constitutione mundi, ait: "mensis hic vobis initium mensuum, primus est vobis in mensibus anni", primum mensem vernum tempus adpellans (Exam. I 4, 13; p. 11, 1–6 and 23–26 Sch.).* This can be paraphrased thus: although *initium* in this Scripture text can be interpreted in a temporal sense,<sup>19</sup> since the liturgy applies it to Easter, a feast that falls in spring-time, it has nevertheless first of all the meaning of "foundation". For "this month" (*mensis hic*) is the month in which the world began to exist. And every spring offers an image of the origin of things. Therefore, just as the creation is the beginning of the world, this month is the beginning of the year; just as the creation is the foundation of the world, this month is the foundation of the year.

Since to the Romans spring is in the beginning of the year, this reasoning seems somewhat forced. The origin of this explication must be sought in the Jewish exegesis. To the Jews "this month" was the seventh one in the yearly cycle, and this seventh month was called now by Scripture the first one. Philo reminds us of this fact, making the Ambrosian passage more understandable. On the feast of the unleavened bread he says: "This may be regarded

<sup>19</sup> Savage neglects the *et* before *de tempore* and translates: "although that statement is to be interpreted merely of time, because there is a reference to the Pasch of the Lord, which is celebrated at the beginning of spring. Therefore, He created heaven and earth at that time when the month began, from which time it is fitting that the world took its rise: This is incomprehensible.

from two points of view, one peculiar to the nation, referring to the migration..., the other universal, following the lead of nature, and in agreement with the general cosmic order. To show that this affirmation is absolutely true, will require some examination. This month comes seventh in order and number as judged by the cycle [116] of the sun, but in importance it is first, and therefore it is described as the first in the sacred books.<sup>20</sup> The reason for this I believe to be as follows. In the spring equinox we have a kind of likeness and portraiture of that first epoch in which this world was created... So every year God reminds us of the creation of the world by setting before our eyes the spring when everything blooms and flowers. *And therefore there is a good reason for describing it in the laws as the first month because in a sense it is an image of the primal origin reproduced from it like the imprint from an archetypal seal*".<sup>21</sup> Undoubtedly, St. Ambrose had this passage or a similar one before him.<sup>22</sup>

To the saint this was, however, not the most important meaning of the Exodus text under discussion. Just as it was applied by the Jews to the passing through the Red Sea, it was applied in Christian liturgy to the *pascha Christi*. That is also why he discusses the Exodus text here. It gives him an opportunity to remind his hearers of what Easter signifies to them: *simul illud advertere licet, quia iure concurrunt, ut eo tempore videatur in hanc generationem atque in hos usus ingressus tributus, quo tempore ex hac generatione in regenerationem legitimus est transitus, siquidem verno tempore filii [117] Istrahel Aegyptum reliquerunt et per mare transierunt, baptizati in nube et in mari, ut apostolus*

<sup>20</sup> Exodus 12,2: 'Ο μὴν οὗτος ὑμῖν ἀρχὴ μηνῶν, πρῶτός ἐστιν ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς μηνσὶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, precisely the text discussed by St. Ambrose.

<sup>21</sup> *De special. leg.* II 150–152: διττός δὲ ὁ περὶ αὐτῆς λόγος, ὁ μὲν ἴδιος τοῦ ἔθνους ἔνεκα τῆς λεχθείσης ἀποικίας, ὁ δὲ κοινὸς κατὰ φύσεως ἀκολουθίαν καὶ τὴν τοῦ κόσμου παντὸς ἀρμονίαν. ὡς δ' ἄψευδής ἡ ὑπόσχεσις, ἐπισκηπτέον. "Ἐβδομος ὦν ὁ μὴν οὗτος ἀριθμῷ τε καὶ τάξει κατὰ τὸν ἡλιακὸν κύκλον δυνάμει πρῶτός ἐστι, διὸ καὶ πρῶτος ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις ἀναγράφεται. αἴτιον δὲ ὡς γε οἶμαι τόδε· τὴν ἐαρινὴν ἰσημερίαν ἀπεικόνισμά τι καὶ μῆμημα συμβέβηκεν εἶναι τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐκείνης, καθ' ἣν ὅδε ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο... καθ' ἑκάστον οὖν ἐνιαυτὸν ὑπομιμνήσκων ὁ θεὸς τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ἀνέφηνε τὸ ἔαρ, ἐν ᾧ πάντα ἀνθεῖ καὶ βλαστάνει. διόπερ οὐκ ἀπὸ σκοποῦ πρῶτος ἀναγράφεται μὴν ἐν τοῖς νόμοις, ἐπειδὴ τρόπον τινὰ τῆς πρώτης ἀρχῆς ἐκμαγεῖόν ἐστιν, ἀπ' ἐκείνης ὥσπερ ἀρχετύπου σφραγίδος τυπωθεῖς (text and transl. by F.H. Colson, in the *Loeb Classical Library*, Philo, Vol. VII, p. 398–399).

<sup>22</sup> The idea that the beginning of the world occurred in spring is also found in Vergil's *Georgics* II 338, undoubtedly known to St. Ambrose. To this Heyne has the following interesting note: *Quanto cum ornatu exposuit hoc: mundo natales in vernal tempus incidisse! An ante Maronem aliquis ita statuerit, nescio: ... Quod poetae fingere licuit: hoc alii disputationis theologicæ caput facere ausi sunt, num vere an autumno mundus exordium habuerit* (London, 1831, Vol. I, p. 302–303).

*dixit, et eo tempore domini quotannis Iesu Christi pascha celebratur* (p. 12, 3–10 Sch.). It is just, St. Ambrose says, that creation took place in the time in which the re-creation would occur (*sic!*). He thus expresses what was, to him, the deepest sense of the Exodus text, and he explains it as follows: *hoc est animarum transitus a vitiis ad virtutem, a passionibus carnis ad gratiam sobrietatemque mentis, a malitiae nequitiaeque fermento ad veritatem et sinceritatem. Regeneratis itaque dicitur: "mensis hic vobis initium mensuum, primus est vobis in mensibus anni". Derelinquit enim et deserit qui abluitur intellegibilem illum Pharaon, principem istius mundi dicens: "abrenuntio tibi, diabole, et operibus tuis et imperiis tuis"* (p. 12, 10–18 Sch.).

Finally, Ambrose discusses still another text on *initium*, viz., Num. 24, 20: *initium nationum Amalech et semem eius peribit*. To him, *initium nationum* is the *princeps istius mundi*, i.e., Satan, and *semen eius* the *impii et infideles*. The saint is here in the regions of allegoric interpretation, as it was used in the early School of Alexandria. We have already referred to Philo. Both here and in the subsequent passage St. Ambrose prefers this allegoric interpretation to that of St. Basil who limits himself to the literal interpretation of Scripture. The latter, in fact, represents the Neo-Alexandrine School, which, under the influence of that of Antioch, prefers the literal interpretation in all apologetical and theological discussions.<sup>23</sup>

After this lengthy discussion of *principium* in the sense of "foundation" St. Ambrose continues as follows: *Est etiam initium mysticum, ut illud est: "ego sum primus et novissimus, initium et finis" et illud in evangelio praecipue, quod interrogatus dominus quis esset respondit: "initium quod et loquor vobis". qui vere et secundum divinitatem est initium omnium, quia nemo ante ipsum, et finis, quia nemo ultra ipsum est. secundum evangelium initium est viarum domini in opera eius, ut per ipsum disceret hominum genus vias domini sequi et operari opera dei. in hoc ergo principio, id est in Christo fecit deus caelum et terram, quia "per ipsum omnia facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est": in ipso, quia "in ipso constant omnia" et ipse est "primogenitus [118] totius creaturae", sive quia ante omnem creaturam, sive quia sanctus, quia primogeniti sancti sunt, ut "primogenitus Istrahel", non quia ante omnes, sed quia sanctior ceteris. sanctus autem dominus super omnem creaturam et secundum corporis susceptionem, quia solus sine peccato, solus sine vanitate, omnis autem creatura subiecta vanitati est* (*Exam.* I 4, 15; p. 13, 4–20 Sch.).

<sup>23</sup> Cp. Quasten, *o.c.*, p. 2.

The general content of this passage is as follows: "The Gospel teaches that there is still another "beginning", viz., Christ. He is the beginning, first, on account of His divinity (*secundum divinitatem*). In this "beginning", that is, in Christ, God created heaven and earth; this is confirmed by several Scripture texts. In one of these texts Christ is said to be "the firstborn of all creatures". He can be said this for two reasons; in the first place, since He is earlier than all other beings, and, secondly, since He is holy, just as Israel was called "firstborn" because of its holiness. Because of His holiness Christ can also be called "the first" or the "beginning" in so far He assumed a body (*et secundum corporis susceptionem*),<sup>24</sup> for He is without sin and vanity."

From the structural point of view, this is a new paragraph. St. Ambrose explains here the seventh meaning of *principium*, earlier called "a divine power". One could be inclined to see in this text another Eastern fragment. However, no particular reference to this feast is made. In fact, this passage contains that interpretation of the *Genesis* text, which from the historical point of view has been the first. Only with the background of this interpretation the passage here becomes fully understandable.

According to Philo and other Jewish thinkers, the words ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν should not be interpreted literally but allegorically: they have a hidden, mystical sense—hence *initium mysticum* in St. Ambrose's text. Accordingly, "heaven and earth" did not indicate our heaven and earth but their ideas,<sup>25</sup> existing in the Logos. This Logos, shaped by God, is often identified with Wisdom, about which Scripture speaks so frequently. A fundamental text in this connection is Prov. 8:27, where Wisdom states: *Quando praeparabat caelos, aderam*. (This text was also cited by St. Ambrose (p. 10, 14 Sch.).) [119]

An interesting interpretation of this Jewish opinion occurs in the *Timaeus* commentary by Calcidius, who translates, as we may take for certain, a passage of Origen's Commentary on *Genesis*. The *Hebraei*, he says, believe *initium minime temporarium dici, neque enim tempus ullum fuisse ante mundi exornationem*; then, according to the well-known scheme, follow the many senses of *initium* found in Scripture: *Est tamen unum rerum omnium initium, de quo Salomon in Proverbiis "Creavit me", inquit, "deus progressionis suae semitam, cui nitens*

<sup>24</sup> Savage: "For the very reason that He assumed a body"! (p. 15).

<sup>25</sup> See my former paper, *Vig. Christ.* 16 (1962), p. 210 s.

*efficeret opera divina constituitque ante ortum mundi terraeque et profundi foundationem, ante tractus fontium aggestionesque montanas*, aperte indicans praeexunte divina sapientia caelum terramque facta eandemque divinam sapientiam fore universitatis primordium. Ex quo apparet sapientiam factam quidem a deo, sed non aliquo in tempore—neque enim fuerit tempus ullum, quo deus fuerit sine sapientia (p. 280, 14–281, 12 ed. Waszink).<sup>26</sup> One can scarcely wish for a clearer statement that the divine Wisdom is the “beginning” of which *Genesis* speaks. In this Wisdom (ἐν ἀρχῇ = ἐν σοφίᾳ) God created “heaven and earth”,<sup>27</sup> this is, to Philo, their “ideal forms”. In *De opif. mundi* 5, 20 Philo also remarks that the Logos (= Wisdom) is the place in which the ideas are.

The scriptural quotation Prov. 8, 22ff. in Calcidius is worth noting. In a typically Jewish, figurative language Wisdom says: “God created Me as a path along which he wanted to go in order to be guided by it in performing His divine works”. In the Ambrosian comment on the *initium mysticum* the words *secundum evangelium initium est viarum domini in opera eius* remind one of this Scripture text. With Schenkl one might refer to Luke 20, 21: *sed viam Dei in* [120] *veritate doces*, but, as Schenkl has seen well, alongside the reference to the Gospel, the reference to Prov. 8, 22 stands out: Κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ. The text of St. Ambrose resembles even more the Septuagint than that of Calcidius, where the term *initium* is missing.

There is no need for stressing the important place this doctrine of the Logos has occupied in Christian theology. The Logos or Wisdom was identified with the Son of God, the *Verbum Dei*, Who, however, was generated, not created (cp. the γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα of the old *symbola fidei*). Thus Christ is “the Beginning of all things”, at least on account of His divinity (*secundum divinitatem*), and in the *Genesis* text heaven and earth are said to be created in

<sup>26</sup> Cp. the exegetical apparatus by J.H. Waszink in the ed. of Calcidius (Plato Latinus, Vol. IV). The reader’s attention is also drawn to what is said by him in chapter III of the *Praefatio, De Calcidii in commentario auctoribus*, p. CII–CIV. Concerning Prov. 8, 22ff., see J.H. Waszink, *Tertullian, The Treatise against Hermogenes*, Ancient Christian Writers XXIV, Westminster (Md)-London, 1956, p. 132–133 and id., *Observations on Tertullian’s Treatise against Hermogenes*, *Vig. Christ.* 9 (1955), p. 139 ss. See also my *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources*, Leiden, Brill, 1959, p. 57–61.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning *Genesis* 2:4 “on that day God made heaven and earth”, Philo states that the Logos is also meant by “that day” (*Leg. Alleg.* I 21). Cp. Daniélou, *o.c.*, p. 157.

Him. But why and how may he be called the Beginning as a human being (*secundum corporis susceptionem*)? And can it be said that the world was created in Him also with regard to his humanity? St. Ambrose only answers to the first of these two questions. He argues that Christ as a human being can be said the first (= beginning) on account of His holiness; but no application to the Genesis text is made.

In general, St. Ambrose's attention seems to be drawn above all to the problem, how Christ can be said to be the beginning or the first. The question how and why the *Genesis* text can be applied to Him is treated rather superficially. For one thing, the term *sapientia* does not occur in the discussion. Perhaps we may see a weak reminiscence of the Wisdom or Logos in the *virtus divina*, which St. Ambrose lists among the meanings of *principium*. This *virtus* seems to be a translation of the Greek δύναμις. Since to Philo the ideas are δυνάμεις and in the Logos, the term δύναμις seems applicable to the Logos as well. In I Cor. 1, 24 Christ is called Θεοῦ δύναμις. This interpretation is confirmed by John Philoponus' *De opif. mundi*, ch. 3: Τινὲς δὲ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ φασί. πάντα γὰρ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, τουτέστι τῷ υἱῷ. Ἐχριστὸς γὰρ θεοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεοῦ σοφία' (p. 10, 7–9 ed. Reich.).

Apparently this mystical or allegorical sense of "beginning" has had a special place in the exegesis of Genesis 1, 1. In the Ambrosian text, however, this special character does not come to the fore. This has two reasons: first, the fact that St. Ambrose's attention is directed on the question how Christ can be called the first and not on the application to *Genesis*, and, secondly, the place in which [121] this *initium mysticum* is treated. Had St. Ambrose been aware of the special character of this mystical interpretation, he would not have discussed it among those based on the literal understanding of the *Genesis* text but at either the very beginning or the end of the discussion. If St. Ambrose had well arranged the several senses of *principium*, we would have found the following scheme:

*principium* has

- A. a literal sense;
  - this literal sense can be
    - 1. temporal (including the four *causae*).
    - 2. non-temporal.
- B. an allegorical sense.

In conclusion, St. Ambrose is largely dependent on St. Basil. Still, he often weakens the argument by an insufficient insight into the structure of his model. Moreover, while St. Basil, following the method of the Neo-Alexandrine School, only adopts the literal sense, St. Ambrose rather prefers the way shown by members of the early School of Alexandria, especially by Philo and Origen. As for the first observation, one might speak of a deficiency; as for the second, it seems better to speak of a different attitude. Pastoral care dominates all the works of St. Ambrose.<sup>28</sup> It led him to the allegoric interpretation of the Scriptures, just because it gives so much scope to a mystical and edifying approach. On the other hand, it may well be the reason why he paid less attention to divisions and structures.

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<sup>28</sup> Cp. B. Altaner, *Patrologie*, Freiburg, Herder, 1958<sup>5</sup>, p. 341.

'IN THE BEGINNING'  
THE EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS OF THE TERM  
*ARCHE* IN GENESIS 1:1\*

A dominant feature of Greek literature in late Antiquity is the encounter of classical culture and Christianity. This encounter, which so deeply influenced the development of our Western world, often took the form of a conflict. We could compare this with the conflicts between older and younger generations which occur throughout history. Classical culture was past its prime, senescent. Christianity had the dynamism of youth. And, as always, the future belonged to the younger generation. But it could and in fact did learn a great deal from its elders.

It is on account of this influence of classical culture on early Christianity that the writings of Christian authors from this period are not only 'food for theologians', but also have relevance for those who are mainly interested in classical culture. There are two reasons for this. First, they will find a great deal of material in these texts which can provide them with a deeper insight into the classical culture itself. Second, they will be able to make great contributions to a correct understanding of the important and vast field of research of early Christian literature. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that one often has to be more of a (classical) philologist than a theologian to be able to understand the writings of the early Christian authors.

It is regrettable, therefore, that early Christian literature long remained unexplored territory for philologists. It was as if an invisible wall divided the study of pagan and early Christian literature. At the beginning of this century, however, the great Wilamowitz already observed that 'this altogether improper separation should, at least in principle, be ended'.<sup>1</sup> His dedication to this idea can be gauged from the fact that he earmarked the money which he received on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday for a critical edition

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\* Inaugural lecture on taking up the readership in the Greek language and literature of late antiquity, delivered on May 9th 1967.

<sup>1</sup> *Die griechische und lateinische Literatur und Sprache* (in: *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, herausgeg. von P. Hinneberg), Berlin 1905, p. 144.

of the works of Gregory of Nyssa, which was supervised by his immediate successor in Berlin, Werner Jaeger, until his death.<sup>2</sup>

Besides this work, which has now almost been completed and is called the 'Leiden Corpus' after the place where it was published, there are many other publications which show that much has changed since the days of Wilamowitz. I need only refer to the activity of Franz-Joseph Dölger in Bonn and its continuation in the *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum*; to the many-sided *oeuvre* of Père Festugière, to the studies of Daniélou and De Lubac and the series *Sources Chrétiennes* initiated by these two Jesuits, a series which has given us greater access to many writings from the first centuries of Christianity; to the works from the school of Schrijnen and Mohrmann, whose main aim has been to bring out the distinctive character of these writings. One could also mention eminent scholars writing in English like Dodds and Nock, whose studies have contributed in a special way to a better understanding of the climate of thought in the first centuries of the Christian era.<sup>3</sup> This list is far from complete, as is shown by the fact that names like Marrou and Courcelle are lacking.

In my view, the interest of the above-mentioned authors is weighted towards Latin literature. Students of Christian literature in Latin have one clear advantage over Greek literature. None of the important works of the great Greek apologists and Church Fathers have been commented on. One could perhaps refer to Marrou's commentary on the *Letter to Diognetus*, but this is the exception which proves the rule. The fate of this work can be compared to that of the darling of Latin apologetics, Minucius Felix's *Octavius*. There are as yet no commentaries on the central works of the great Greek authors.<sup>4</sup> The situation in the Latin camp is more favourable. Some important works there have been provided with commentaries. Here I must mention the name of my honoured teacher Waszink, who opened up a considerable part of Christian Latin literature in his commentary on Tertullian's *De anima*. In my view, it is precisely the lack of this kind of study which has made

<sup>2</sup> See *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, vol. I, ed. W. Jaeger, Leiden 1960, p. V and X.

<sup>3</sup> E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, Cambridge, 1965; A.D. Nock, *Conversion. The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Oxford 1933, and *Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Background*, New York 1964.

<sup>4</sup> An exception can be made for the annotated edition of Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, by Michel Aubineau in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*, n° 119.

the Greek Christian literature so inaccessible to this day. Commentaries on some of the important works could supply the key to the great complex which now usually remains locked up in the theological reading room and which is referred to by the name of the man who performed such an immense task during the last century in making the writings of the early Christian authors generally available, Abbé Migne.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, it cannot be my intention here to start filling this gap by providing a Greek text with commentary. Rather I would like to discuss a special theme in order to show that study of the writings of the Greek Christian authors is of great importance both for the classical scholar and for the theologian. For the classical scholar, because he can see how classical culture exerted its influence and thus revealed its own nature in its contact with Christianity, which was born in a Hebrew environment. For the theologian, because by studying those writings he or she can form a more accurate idea of the history of theology, in particular of the way in which it was influenced by Greek philosophical thinking, an influence which—in any judgement—has to be considered a historical fact of paramount importance.

The subject I have chosen is the problem of 'the beginning of things'. How was this question treated in the first centuries of Christianity and to what extent was this treatment influenced by Greek philosophical thinking? More concretely this problem can be formulated as follows: how does the Christian thinker from the first centuries of our era react when he unwinds or opens the Bible and reads there the opening text: 'Εν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'?

For a correct understanding of this matter it is necessary to know that the Christian thinkers from the first centuries, who wanted to justify their beliefs to others and to themselves—I am particularly referring to apologists and Church Fathers like Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus—were all trained in Greek philosophy. To understand their reaction to Genesis 1:1, one has to realize what place the origin of things occupied in philosophy. In fact, there is hardly an issue which occupied a more central place in Greek philosophy

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<sup>5</sup> A good survey of the work carried out by Migne can be found in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, s.v. Migne (X, 2, 1722ff.).

than the problem of the origin of things. The Greek word for this is ἀρχή, which means both 'beginning' and 'principle'.<sup>6</sup> In the latter meaning it is closely related to the word αἰτία or αἴτιον, which means cause. For the earliest philosophers this cause is one of the so-called 'elements', later termed στοιχεῖα: water, earth, air, and fire. 'All things originate from the ἀρχή water,' said Thales of Miletus, the man regarded by most scholars as the first Greek philosopher. And if, taking a giant leap across Greek philosophy, we join the company of the thinker who can be seen as the last great philosopher of Antiquity, Plotinus, we once again find one principle, one ἀρχή, which is the origin of all things. Now it is no longer a material but a spiritual principle: the One, raised above all Being and Thinking. Everything that exists originates from the One via a process which is usually referred to by the name 'emanation', 'outpouring', but which cannot really be put in human terms, because it is a totally unique and incomprehensible event. This Plotinian system is therefore diametrically opposed to a view like that of Thales, inasmuch as it posits the origin in a spiritual principle, a process of derivation 'from above', whereas Thales posits a process 'from below'. But they agree in the search for the one ἀρχή. The philosophers between Thales and Plotinus also look for the beginning or the principle of things, though not all of them arrived at one principle. We are familiar, for instance, with the four causes which Aristotle deems necessary for the coming into being of something. He starts from the notion of the artist who makes a statue. What does this require? First, the material, matter, e.g. bronze—the material cause. Second, the maker, i.e. the person who initiates and sustains the process of change—the efficient cause. Third, the form which the maker gives to this matter—the formal cause. Fourth, the end to which the maker does what he does—the final cause.<sup>7</sup>

There is more evidence that the ἀρχή problem occupied a central place in Greek philosophy. We know of a large number of philosophers that they wrote a book entitled Περί φύσεως. One gets the impression that every thinker saw it as his first task to write such a work. What does this title mean? How should it be translated? The translation 'On Nature' certainly does not convey its meaning.

<sup>6</sup> See Procopius of Gaza, *Comm. in Genesin*: θεὸς δὲ μόνος τὸ ἀναρχον, καθ' ὃ τι δ' ἂν λάβῃς σημαίνονμενον τὴν ἀρχήν, εἴτε κατ' αἰτίαν εἴτε κατὰ χρόνον.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Phys.* II, 3 (194b23ff.); *Metaph.* IV, 2 (1013a24ff.).

Following Lucretius, who wrote *De rerum natura* in Latin, one could translate 'On the nature of things', but this, too, fails to explain the implications of the Greek title. Our word 'nature' denotes something static here, whereas the Greek term φύσις undoubtedly expresses something dynamic. For a Greek the title 'Περὶ φύσεως' implies first of all the question of how everything has come into being and grown (φύεσθαι), i.e. the question of the ἀρχή. This can be illustrated by the famous words which Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates in his *Phaedo*: When I was young, I had a great desire for that wisdom which is called the knowledge concerning the nature of things (περὶ φύσεως). It seemed to me magnificent to know the causes (αἰτίαι) of each thing, why it comes into being and why it perishes and why it exists (96a).

How, then, does the mind trained in this Greek philosophy react to the first word of Genesis: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'? The reader will certainly be agreeably surprised that the Bible, too, literally put the problem of the origin of things in first place. And we should not be surprised to find that many pages in the writings of the Church Fathers are devoted to the interpretation of this text. Indeed, it gave rise to a separate genre of literature, the so-called Hexaemeral literature, i.e. the literature dedicated to the Hexaemeron,<sup>8</sup> the six-day work, the work of creation. The first author of whom such a work has been preserved is Basil the Great, who was bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia from 370 to 379. It consists of nine homilies or sermons preached in one week of Lent in or about 378. In the first of these sermons Basil discusses the text of Genesis 1:1 that we have just cited. This work was very influential and frequently imitated. After Basil's death his brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, also wrote a treatise on the Hexaemeron, in order to defend Basil's work and to add to it. Some fifteen years later, in 386, the great bishop of Milan, Ambrose, also

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<sup>8</sup> As was already observed by, among others, F.E. Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature. A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis* (Chicago 1912) 1, n. 2, this term is incorrect. The proper term would be 'the Hexaemeros', which is used by K. Gronau, *Poseidonios und die jüdisch-christliche Genesis-exegese* (Leipzig-Berlin 1914), since the Greek words are ἐξαήμερος κοσμοποιία, the noun being omitted because it was taken to be understood. The term 'Hexaemeron' probably goes back to the Latin translation of the title of Basil's work Εἰς τὴν ἐξαήμερον: *In Hexaëmeron*. As a result of this translation, people probably lost sight of the gender and the nature of this word. See the title in note 12.

preached on the Hexaemeron, often following Basil almost word for word. In about 400 a Latin translation of Basil's work itself appeared, produced by a certain Eustathius. And when in the beginning of the sixth century Procopius of Gaza compiled a kind of anthology of the commentaries of the various authors on Genesis, though without mentioning their names, Basil's commentaries occupied a very prominent position.<sup>9</sup> The writing of treatises on the Hexaemeron remained popular into the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup> The place of this Hexaemeral literature in Christianity could be compared with that of the works *Περὶ φύσεως* in Greek philosophy.

After this general discussion it is now time to look at the specific ways in which the Christian authors reacted to Genesis 1:1. At first sight the statement 'God created the heaven and the earth' seems so at odds with the generally accepted notion in Greek philosophy that nothing can become of nothing<sup>11</sup> that one would only expect these authors to see a total opposition between Greek and Christian thinking here. But Genesis 1:1 adds something else: God created the heaven and the earth 'in the beginning', ἐν ἀρχῇ. This word ἀρχή resonated strongly in the mind formed by Greek thinking, as can be understood from what I said earlier. And what we see happening now is that by means of this word ἀρχή a considerable body of philosophical material enters the discussions of the Christian authors on Genesis.

We should also consider the following: where we translate 'in the beginning', the Greek (and also the original Hebrew text) has no article. It is true that in most cases the correct English translation of the expression ἐν ἀρχῇ without article is 'in the beginning'. For instance, when Socrates says ὅπερ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἔλεγον, in the *Phaedo*, this should of course be translated 'as I said in the beginning'. But here, in the case of Genesis, where one is inclined to look for more than just the obvious meaning, it is important to note the absence of the article. The interpretations of it are easier to understand if one translates: 'In *a* beginning God created the

<sup>9</sup> P.G. 87, cols. 22ff. In connection with 36C, it is remarked there that Procopius is following Acacius of Caesarea. But it is in fact Basil whom Procopius is following.

<sup>10</sup> See Robbins's work (note 8) and also the *Monitum* introducing *Hexaëmeron sive cosmopoeia* by Georgius Pisida (P.G. 92, cols. 1383-1424).

<sup>11</sup> According to Eusebius, Xenophanes already accepted this notion (*Praep. Ev.* I, 29, 21 Mras).

heaven and the earth' or 'There was a beginning in which God created the heaven and the earth'.

In some cases this observation can provide a solution to problems concerning the meaning of a text. An example is the first sentence of Basil's first homily. It is striking to see how all the translators, from the very first in c. 400 to those of our own times, for instance Giet in *Sources Chrétiennes*,<sup>12</sup> get it wrong by failing to notice that ἀρχή has no article. Let me start by indicating what, in my view, Basil says. After quoting the opening text of Genesis, he says: 'It is an appropriate beginning for someone who sets out to describe the structure of the cosmos to state first that there was *a* beginning in the ordering of visible things.'<sup>13</sup> So all Basil is really saying is that the word 'beginning' is a very good beginning. We should, of course, bear in mind here how resonant this term 'beginning' (ἀρχή) is for him. Giet, however, reads something quite different in this text. He translates: 'Il convient de prime abord à qui va décrire l'organisation du monde, de mentionner, en tête de son discours, le principe de l'ordre qui règne dans le monde visible'. According to Giet, Basil talks about '*the* beginning of the order which governs this world', and this principle—as is shown by the incorrect translation of the next sentence—is God. In his view, therefore, Basil comments on the words of Genesis: 'God created', whereas Basil is evidently referring to the term ἀρχή. Eustathius went even further astray when he translated this sentence: *Conveniens exordium de mundi compositione narraturus adsumpsit decorationem gestorum operum, sui faciens sermonis exordium*.<sup>14</sup> In this translation Basil says that Moses was right to start his discussion on the composition of the world by talking about the splendid organization of the creation. At least that is how I believe these words should be read. The central notion has become here *decoratio*—this is the less felicitous translation of the Greek term διακόσμησις so familiar from Plato and, following him, from the Stoa. But Basil is concerned with the term ἀρχή, which, as in the text of Genesis, has been used without an article.

<sup>12</sup> Basil of Cesarea, *Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*, texte grec, introd. et trad. de S Giet, Paris, 1949.

<sup>13</sup> Πρέπουσα ἀρχὴ τῷ περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου συστάσεως μέλλοντι διηγέσθαι, ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν ὁραμένων διακοσμήσεως προθεῖναι τοῦ λόγου.

<sup>14</sup> E. Amand de Mendieta and S.Y. Rudberg, *Eustathius. Ancienne version latine des neuf homélies sur l'Hexaéméron de Basile de Césarée* (TU 66), Berlin 1958. p. 4, 4–6.

So there was a beginning in which God created the heaven and the earth. What is this beginning? What is this ἀρχή? As a first answer to this question we find the following: 'This ἀρχή is the matter, eternally co-existent with God, from which he formed all things'. The proponents of this interpretation thus find a way of applying to Genesis the Greek maxim that generation and destruction are, in an absolute sense, impossible. This view is mentioned and disputed as non-orthodox in Tertullian's work *Against Hermogenes*. According to Tertullian, Hermogenes takes up the word ἀρχή in Genesis in order to read something improper into it, 'as heretics are inclined to do', he says, and he uses a very pithy expression for this. Heretics are in the habit of placing simple words on the rack (*simplicia quaeque torquere*), in order to wrench all kinds of meanings from them, just as confessions are wrenched from slaves. 'We, however,' he says, 'take words in their usual sense and we therefore read in this word "beginning" a reference to a commencement in time, not the name of some or other substance'.<sup>15</sup>

The view that the ἀρχή, in which God created all things, stems from God is also found in Basil. After establishing that ἐν ἀρχῇ is such an appropriate beginning, he continues: 'For a creation of the heaven and the earth will be related here which did not take place at random but which received its cause from God'.<sup>16</sup> In connection with these last words 'which received its cause from God' we must consider that 'cause' has the same meaning as ἀρχή. 'To receive its cause from God' is therefore the same as 'to receive its beginning from God', which is different from 'to find its cause in God', as Giet would have it.

<sup>15</sup> *Adversus Hermogenem* c. 19, 2: *ita principium sive initium inceptionis esse verbum, non alicuius substantiae nomen* (p. 36, 16–17 Waszink). However, one cannot avoid the impression that Tertullian, too, is guilty of *torquere simplicia* further on in his interpretation of Gen. 1:1. But the view which he defends was almost generally accepted by Christian authors. Justin does not yet seem to have had a clear idea of this problem. See H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, Oxford, 1966, p. 12 and L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 112. In contrast to what Chadwick says, Athenagoras plainly states that God is ungenerated but matter is generated (*Supplicatio* 4.1).

<sup>16</sup> Οὐρανοῦ γὰρ καὶ γῆς ποίησις παραδίδοσθαι μέλλει οὐκ αὐτομάτως συνενεχθεῖσα, ὥς τινες ἐφαντάσθησαν, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν λαβοῦσα. Giet translates the participles in this sentence predicatively: "Car l'origine du ciel et de la terre ne doit pas être présentée comme ...", which is incorrect. See also H.A. Wolfson, 'Plato's Pre-existent Matter in Patristic Philosophy', in: *The Classical Tradition. Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan*, ed. by L. Wallach, Ithaca–New York 1966, p. 409–420.

We now go on to ask: 'What is this beginning which the creation received from God?' Let us proceed from Basil's interpretation. He observes first of all that this term 'beginning' should not be taken to imply that we are dealing here with the first thing that God created. No, Genesis talks about the beginning of the sense-perceptible world.<sup>17</sup> There is another, supra-sensible world, which was created before this world. But Genesis does not talk about this world since it is meant for people who are mere children in their knowledge (γνῶσις).

According to Basil, therefore, Genesis talks about a beginning of sense-perceptible things, a beginning in time.<sup>18</sup> But even then this term can have various meanings. Basil lists four, gives an example of each, and goes on to show that these four meanings are applicable to the text of Genesis. This passage, the details of which will have to be omitted here, has a very interesting feature. The four meanings which Basil gives to the term ἀρχή are drawn from Aristotle, as is evident from their descriptions. It would seem that Basil was thinking of Aristotle's four causes, which I mentioned above, although he had to introduce some changes to be able to apply them to Genesis.<sup>19</sup> However, the *examples* which he gives for these four meanings are not drawn from Aristotle but from the Bible. For instance, we read: 'In the first place ἀρχή is used in the sense of "first movement"—an Aristotelian term—as in the text "the beginning of a good way (i.e. way of life) is to perform justice"', which is a text from the Book of Proverbs (16:7).<sup>20</sup> Basil deals with the other three meanings of ἀρχή in the same way: a definition from Aristotle is illustrated by an example from the Bible. The interesting thing about this passage is the idea which underlies it. Basil is apparently convinced that the conceptual apparatus of Greek philosophy can also be found in the Bible. It never occurs to him that the holy books of the Jews express a different

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<sup>17</sup> Hence τῶν ὁραμένων in the text of note 13.

<sup>18</sup> *In Hexaemeron* I 5 (13 C).

<sup>19</sup> For instance, he could not attribute the sense of 'efficient cause' to the ἀρχή of Genesis, since this is God himself. Nor, apparently, did he want to give it the sense of 'matter'; instead he chose the meaning 'foundation'. For these two meanings he could also refer to Aristotle, *Metaph.* IV 1 1012b34ff. He kept the senses of formal and final cause.

<sup>20</sup> *In Hexaem.* I 5 (16A). Basil has apparently chosen this Bible text for its correspondence with Aristotle, *Metaph.* IV 1 1012b35, who also talks about the beginning of a way.

mentality. The Greek way of thinking is the only possible one for him, which effectively means that he imposes it on the Bible.

Basil's application of these four meanings of ἀρχή to Genesis 1:1 can be explained very briefly: God gave the creation an ἀρχή, first in the sense of a 'beginning of movement', second in the sense of a 'first foundation',<sup>21</sup> third in the sense of a 'principle' of 'form' or 'order', and fourth in the sense of 'goal'.<sup>22</sup>

These four meanings come under the heading 'beginning in time' in Basil.<sup>23</sup> 'However,' he continues,<sup>24</sup> 'a beginning is basically something indivisible, a beginning is timeless. For if a beginning implied time, one could distinguish between beginning, middle, and end in this time. This would lead to a beginning of a beginning, which is absurd.'<sup>25</sup> Hence this word ἀρχή in Genesis should perhaps be read differently, namely as a term for the indivisible moment of creation, in which God willed the world and it thereby existed, without time being involved.'<sup>26</sup> Basil sees this view expressed in Aquila's Greek translation, where the first words of Genesis are not ἐν ἀρχῇ, as in the Septuagint, but ἐν κεφαλαίῳ. This can be translated: 'At the head of things God created the heaven and the earth'. Calcidius translated this in Latin as: *Caput rerum condidit deus caelum et terram*.<sup>27</sup> Here there is no reference to the aspect of time whatsoever.

Shortly after Basil's death (in 379), his brother Gregory of Nyssa also wrote a work on the Hexaemeron, not in the form of sermons but of a theoretical treatise which supplements and completes Basil's work. Gregory endorses the 'timeless' interpretation of ἐν ἀρχῇ. He says: 'In God power coincides with his will; what he wills, he is able to do; and his will is wisdom ... That is why his will, his wisdom, and the being (οὐσία) of things should be conceived of as

<sup>21</sup> In this case the best translation reads: 'As a beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. So the heavens and the earth constitute the beginning here. See below pp. 89–90.

<sup>22</sup> *In Hexaem.* I 6 (16B–C).

<sup>23</sup> The temporal element seems to be present only in the first meaning ('first movement'). But in all the words the three other ἀρχαί are also present.

<sup>24</sup> A free rendering of *In Hexaem.* I 6 (16 C–17 A).

<sup>25</sup> An idea deriving from Aristotle, *Metaph.* II 4 (1000b26–27); *Phys.* I 6 (189a30). Cf. K. Gronau, *op. cit.* n. 8) 44, n. 3.

<sup>26</sup> ὁμοῦ τῇ βουλήσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἀχρόνως συνυφεστάναι τὸν κόσμον (17 A).

<sup>27</sup> *In Tim.* c. 276 (p. 280.6 Waszink).

one'.<sup>28</sup> One detects here Gregory's more speculative bent in the way he expands on matters barely touched on by Basil.<sup>29</sup> Gregory, too, refers to Aquila's translation ἐν κεφαλαίῳ. For him, however, this formulation expresses something different from ἐν ἀρχῇ: whereas ἐν ἀρχῇ denotes the indivisible, timeless moment of creation, ἐν κεφαλαίῳ implies the idea of 'all things together'. 'The heaven and the earth', those two extremes, designate the universe; they are at the 'head' of all things.<sup>30</sup>

So far the explanations of the term ἀρχή in Genesis 1:1 can be classified as literal interpretations. In any case that was the view of the authors in question. In his third homily Basil explicitly opposes those who give interpretations of the Bible which deviate from the literal sense, i.e. those who support an allegorical explanation.<sup>31</sup> 'If it says "water," he states there, 'we must take this to mean water and nothing else.' In this respect he therefore sides with the followers of the Antiochian school, who advocated a literal interpretation of the holy books. They met opposition from the school of Alexandria, which was founded by Pantaenus in the second century and had been led by Clement and Origen. This Alexandrian school has become famous for, among other things, its so-called allegorical interpretation of Holy Scripture. The exponents of this school tried to find a deeper sense under the literal meaning of the holy texts, for the edification and spiritual enlightenment of the reader.<sup>32</sup> This method of biblical interpretation had been practised earlier by the Jewish philosopher Philo, who lived at the beginning of the first century and was also active in Alexandria. It was influenced by a similar way of interpreting texts used in Greek philosophy, particularly in the Stoa, to explain the ancient mythological stories and later the Homeric poems.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *In Hexaem.* P.G. 44, 69A.

<sup>29</sup> ὁμοῦ τῇ βουλῇσει τοῦ θεοῦ (see note 26). Cf. *In Hexaem.* I 2 (8 C) τῇ ῥοπῇ τοῦ θελήματος μονῇ.

<sup>30</sup> *In Hexaem.* P.G. 44 (72 A). See also Ambrosius *Exam.* I 4, 16: *Sunt ergo et qui principium non pro tempore accipiant, sed ante tempus et κεφάλαιον vel caput, ut dicamus latine, quasi summam operis, quia rerum visibilium summa caelum et terra est* (p. 14. 1-4 Schenkl). See J.C.M. van Winden, 'In the Beginning', in *Vig. Chr.* 17 (1963) 105-121 (printed elsewhere in this volume).

<sup>31</sup> *In Hexaem.* III 9 (73 C-76 A).

<sup>32</sup> See especially the introductions by H. de Lubac to the editions of Origen's homilies on Genesis and Exodus in *Sources Chrétiennes* (nos. 7 and 16).

<sup>33</sup> See J. Pépin, *Mythe et Allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, Paris 1958.

This allegorical method was also applied to Genesis 1:1. About 150 years before Basil Origen wrote his homilies on Genesis. The first starts as follows: "There was a beginning in which God created the heaven and the earth." What was this beginning of all things other than our Lord and Saviour of all, Jesus Christ, first-born of all creation? In this beginning, i.e. in his Word, God made the heaven and the earth; as John the evangelist says at the beginning of his gospel: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him nothing was made." Therefore, Origen continues, 'Genesis does not talk about any beginning in time, but says that the heaven and the earth were made in the Saviour.'<sup>34</sup>

Origen thus relates this first word of Genesis to Christ, the pre-existent Christ, i.e. existing before the creation. This doctrine of the pre-existent Christ was to play a very significant role in Christian theology.<sup>35</sup> The biblical texts which form the basis of this doctrine for Origen can be clearly recognized in the above quotation. First, there is Paul's statement that Christ is 'the first-born of all creation'. These are words from the famous hymn to Christ in the letter to the faithful of Colossae: 'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For in him all things were created, in the heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible' (1:15-16). Origen, then, was not the first to connect Christ with the creation.

The other New Testament text on which Origen bases his interpretation is of course the beginning of the prologue to the Gospel of John: 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος.' 'In the beginning was the Word.' The phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ, which immediately suggests the beginning of Genesis and no doubt wishes to recall it, can be simply translated 'In the beginning', but also 'As a beginning there was the Word', just as Genesis 1:1 can be read as if it said: 'As a beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. This last view is explicitly taught by Acacius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (c. 350), in his explanation of the first word of Genesis.<sup>36</sup> The Word, the λόγος,

<sup>34</sup> See G.C.S. Origenes Werke, Band VI 1, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> For the origin of the idea of pre-existence, see R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannes-evangelium* I, Freiburg-Basel-Vienna 1965, p. 290ff. For its development in early Christianity, cf. L. Scheffczyk, *Schöpfung und Vorsehung (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte)*, herausgeg. von M. Schmaus und A. Grillmeier, Bnd II, Fasc 2a), Freiburg-Basel-Vienna 1963 and the literature listed there.

<sup>36</sup> He believes the text can be read as saying: ἀρχὴν ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός κτλ. He

is the beginning of things, in which all things were made by God.

A great deal has been written about the beginning of the Gospel of John, in particular about the origin of the Logos concept used there. Its origin is primarily sought in Jewish speculations on the 'Word of God', by which everything was created according to Genesis. For God spoke, and it was. In this way there is a direct relation between Genesis and the prologue to the Gospel of John. (But we should bear in mind that the word ἀρχή in Genesis does not yet play a role here.) These Jewish reflections on the Word of God are given a new expression in the Wisdom literature. There it is 'Wisdom' in which God created all things. We read in Proverbs 8:22 in the Septuagint text: 'God created me (Wisdom) as the beginning of the way which he went to his creation; before time he founded me in the beginning' (ἐν ἀρχῇ, we can also translate this 'as a beginning' in view of what was said above). These wisdom texts, too, certainly influenced the prologue to the Gospel of John. It is striking, however, that John does not use the term 'Wisdom' but 'Logos' or 'Word'. This can be explained in various ways. One explanation is that John was influenced by Greek philosophy, in particular by the Logos doctrine found in the Jewish thinker Philo of Alexandria, who was strongly inspired by Greek philosophy. In a nutshell, we can say that the inquiry into the sources of the Logos concept in the prologue to the Gospel of John leads us via the Wisdom literature to the story of Genesis, while Greek philosophy acted as a secondary source.<sup>37</sup>

This digression serves to show that Origen's explanation of ἐν ἀρχῇ in Genesis follows the opposite route, as it were. He uses the beginning of the Gospel of John and the Wisdom texts to explain Genesis, while Greek philosophy, too, exerts its influence. Origen's use of Wisdom texts to explain Genesis 1:1 can be inferred from a passage in Calcidius' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*.<sup>38</sup> In all likelihood this passage derives from a commentary by Origen on

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sees a confirmation of this view in Prov. 8:22, which says in the same breath that Wisdom is ἀρχή and that it is ἐν ἀρχῇ. These two expressions are also used for Christ (Col. 1:18; John 1:1). Acacius adds: ὁ δὲ Ὡριγένης τὸ "ἐν ἀρχῇ" βούλεται ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐν σοφίᾳ, τοιούτων τῶ Ὡρίῳ. Cf. R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois*, Rome 1959, p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *o.c.* p. 257-269.

<sup>38</sup> C. 276 (p. 281, 5-15 Waszink) See my *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources*, Leiden 1965<sup>2</sup>, p. 57f.

Genesis, a work of which only a few fragments have survived. 'There is only one beginning of all things,' he says there, 'of which Solomon says in Proverbs: "God created me as the way on which he went"', thus designating Wisdom as the beginning of all that exists.

The fact that the text from Proverbs calls Wisdom ἀρχή probably helps to explain why the first words of Genesis (ἐν ἀρχῇ) came to be identified with 'Wisdom' and the 'Word'. For, as I said, attention originally focused on God's 'speaking' and not on the term ἀρχή. This phase is also recognized in a text of the Christian convert and philosopher Justin Martyr (c. 150), who quotes Genesis 1:1-3: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth: the earth was unstructured and invisible and darkness was upon the deep, and God's spirit was moving over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light", and it happened'. Justin then says: 'Everything was therefore brought about by God's Logos'.<sup>39</sup> Clearly he is referring here to God's creative word and not to the words ἐν ἀρχῇ.

There is more to be said about Justin. This text about God's Logos should, in my view, be connected with Justin's famous doctrine of the λόγος σπερματικός, the 'truth-sowing Logos', which is identical with Christ, whose truth was shared by the human beings living before the incarnation.<sup>40</sup> This doctrine of the Logos Spermatikos in Justin probably has various roots, Greek philosophy certainly being one.<sup>41</sup>

In his *Apology* then,<sup>42</sup> Justin did not yet identify the term ἀρχή in Genesis 1:1 with λόγος and σοφία. This identification is clearly found in Theophilus of Antioch (c. 180). His explanation of the Logos doctrine uses yet another philosophical model, namely the distinction between God's 'internal word' (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) and his 'uttered word' (λόγος προφορικός). God uttered the word which he carries within him—from eternity, one might add—and this uttered Word is the beginning from which all things were made

<sup>39</sup> *Apol.* I c. 59, 3.

<sup>40</sup> See J.H. Waszink, 'Bemerkungen zu Justins Lehre vom Logos Spermatikos', *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser*, (= Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergbd. 1), Münster 1964, p. 380-390. Compare N. Hyldahl, *Philosophie und Christentum. Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins*, Kopenhagen 1966, p. 85; F. Normann, *Christos Didaskalos. Die Vorstellung von Christus als Lehrer in der christlichen Literatur des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts*, Münster 1967, p. 113-119; Barnard, *o.c.*, ch. 7.

<sup>41</sup> See Waszink, *l.c.*, p. 390; Barnard, *o.c.*, p. 98, note 1.

<sup>42</sup> See P. Prigent, *Justin et l'Ancien Testament*, Paris, 1964.

by God.<sup>43</sup> This Logos, this Word, is called 'son of God' and 'first-born of creation' by Theophilus.<sup>44</sup>

After what we have just seen in these second-century authors, Origen's interpretation, which relates the first word of Genesis to Christ, is not so surprising. Only the tone of his homily is very different from the tone we hear in Justin and Theophilus. Whereas these authors speak in abstract and highly philosophical terms—strikingly, the word Christ is not mentioned and instead we find ἀρχή, σοφία, λόγος,—Origen's language is concrete and almost overpowering. 'What is this beginning other than our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?' There is no trace of philosophical terminology here.

Does this mean that there is no philosophical influence in Origen's explanation of Genesis? Far from it. In the first place we should consider that the text is a passage from a sermon and not from a scholarly treatise. If we can base ourselves on the fragment in Calcidius, Origen talked about Genesis 1:1 in a very similar way to Justin and Theophilus. More importantly, it is generally true that the philosophical training of Origen's mind is almost completely hidden behind a veil of biblical phraseology. This makes it very difficult to discover Origen the philosopher. It has also led to deep dissension among scholars on this question. The most extreme positions at this time are held by Heinrich Dörrie and Willy Theiler. The former is inclined to dismiss Origen's philosophical knowledge, whereas the latter discovers a solid philosophical training under the biblical appearance of his writings. Theiler assumes on the strength of a text in Porphyry that

<sup>43</sup> *Ad Autol.* II 10, ἔχων οὖν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἐξερευξάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων. See also II 22.

<sup>44</sup> Tertullian is very close to Theophilus in *Adv. Hermog.* 18, 3: *Si vero sophia eadem dei sermo est, sine quo factum est nihil, sicut et dispositum sine sophia, quale est ut filio dei, sermone unigenito et primogenito, aliquid fuerit praeter patrem antiquius* (p. 35, 14–17 Wsz.). He, too, can be seen to draw a distinction between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός. In *Adv. Hermog.* 45, 1 he observes that the prophets and apostles do not talk about matter in the creation but say that *primo sophiam conditam, initium viarum suarum in opera ipsius, dehinc et sermonem prolatum, per quem omnia facta sunt* (p. 64, 25–65, 2 Wsz.). *Sermo prolatus* is apparently the translation of λόγος προφορικός; while *sophia primo condita* takes the place of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος. An important difference compared with Theophilus is that this *sophia* is said to be *condita*, whereas the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος seems to be ungenerated, as can be inferred from the text quoted in the previous note. The same text provides a clue to the use of the term *sophia* in Tertullian (μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας).

Origen was taught by a man who would later inspire Plotinus, Ammonius Saccas. Dörrie, however, believes that Porphyry is talking about a different Origen. Lack of space prevents me from discussing this here. All I can say is that Theiler's view seems to me to have a firmer foundation. I am convinced that there is a strong philosophical influence in Origen's writings.<sup>45</sup>

This philosophical influence posed a grave danger precisely in connection with the notion of Christ as the Logos, in which all things are created. The danger was the Logos could come to be seen as a being of a lower order than God, just as the Mind (Νοῦς) in Plotinus, which is sometimes also called 'Wisdom',<sup>46</sup> is of a lower order than the One. Did Origen avoid this danger? Here, too, we have an unsolved problem. In any case his position was not so clear that the Arians could not appeal to him in support of their view that Christ was a being of a lower order than God.

This paper has looked at the simple ἐν ἀρχῇ with which the Bible begins and the way it was interpreted by early Christian authors, who had been trained in Greek philosophical thinking. At first sight this interpretation may seem no more than what Tertullian called *torquere simplicia*. But for the student with a more penetrating gaze it is an absorbing spectacle, in which an encounter takes place between Greek philosophical thinking and Christian faith, between classical culture and Christianity, a spectacle which is fascinating for both the classical scholar and the theologian.

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<sup>45</sup> For this problem, see W. Theiler's article *Ammonios als Lehrer des Origenes*, in his book *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus*, Berlin 1966, pp. 1–45, and also H. Dörrie, *Ammonios, der Lehrer Plotins* in *Hermes* 83 (1955) 439–477.

<sup>46</sup> *Enn.* V 1,4,9. Elsewhere (*Enn.* III 2,15,13) Plotinus talks about the λόγος as the beginning, the ἀρχή, of all things. Cf. Origenes *In Jo.* fr. 1 (GCS Origenes Werke, Band IV, p. 484–6).

## THE EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS OF 'HEAVEN AND EARTH' IN GENESIS 1,1

In the title of this article one element asks for a more precise definition, namely 'early Christian'. It is used here for the time from the second half of the second century onwards, *i.e.*, the time in which Christian writers, who themselves have been educated in Greek philosophy, seek a confrontation of their belief with that philosophy. This confrontation reflects itself most clearly in the exegesis of the Bible. The reason for this lies in the view which these thinkers had on the relation between the Bible and philosophy.

The early Christian thinkers did not consider the Bible as a book in opposition to philosophy. On the contrary, they saw it as belonging to the realm of philosophy itself. Moreover, insofar as they believed that philosophy was handed down through the ages (*i.e.* had come to men by tradition and not by personal inspiration), they thought of the Bible as its source and fount. In our modern ears this may sound as a misuse of the term philosophy. In that period, however, there was nothing strange in this notion, at least from a certain philosophical standpoint, *viz.*, that which had a high esteem of 'the wisdom of the Ancients' and considered it as the ultimate source of philosophy. This opinion was handed down from the time of Hellenism, the time in which, through the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greece had come in close contact with the ancient peoples and their wisdom. Posidonius of Apamea (ca. 135–51 B.C.), a thinker belonging to the philosophy of Hellenism, *i.e.*, Stoicism, had given a theoretical expression to this idea in his doctrine of the 'old logos', which is found in the wisdom of the ancients and is the ultimate source of all philosophy. Also in the second century A.D. another philosopher from Apamea, Numenius, was defending the same theory. Christian thinkers could, of course, easily adapt this theory by substituting the Bible as that source. In other [372] words, for them the so-called ancient wisdom was to be found in the scriptures of one ancient people, the Jews, and thus the Bible was the philosophical work *par excellence*.

In actual fact, those Christian thinkers, having been educated in Greek philosophy, were, for the most part, admirers of all the best

in their Greek schooling. It was natural, therefore, that they believed its valuable tenets must necessarily be found in the Bible, which, after all, was its fount and inspiration. It was from this premise that their comments began. The modern interpreter, somewhat startled from time to time by what he reads in their works, must always bear this in mind. He has to appreciate from the outset that for those commentators it was not a question of making a comparison between sacred scripture and philosophy. Both of them belonged to the same realm. Using their training in the Greek schools they set out to interpret the bible, *the* philosophical book.

One of the most fundamental of all problems for the Greek philosopher was that of the origin of things. The Christian, therefore, immediately turned his attention to the book of Genesis and to the creation narrative in particular, which was a subject for many commentators. Their treatises were frequently called *In Hexaëmeron*, i.e., 'On the work of the six days'; hence the general term Hexaëmeral literature. It is in this literature that one discovers a very clear manifestation of that vital factor in western history, namely the meeting point of Christian faith and Greek thought. The following pages attempt to illustrate this point of contact through a survey of the interpretations of the words heaven and earth as found in Genesis chapter one, verse one. The first phrase "In the beginning" has already been subjected to a similar inquiry by myself.<sup>1</sup> What has been said above, in fact, has been more extensively treated there.

Two preliminary remarks may suffice here: in the first place the interpretation of the words "God created" in Genesis 1,1 immediately brought the Christian thinkers in diametric opposition to all their Greek colleagues, for whom creation *ex nihilo* was unknown and incomprehensible. Yet one of the first Christian thinkers, Justin Martyr, seems to understand these words as a creation from that which already was namely 'formless matter'.<sup>2</sup> This view was

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<sup>1</sup> In 'Frühchristliche Bibelexegese. Der Anfang', = the first article in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.* 1,59 ὕλην ἄμορφον; see E.P. Meijering, Zehn Jahre Forschung zum Thema Platonismus und Kirchenväter, *Theologische Rundschau* 36 (1971) 313. The idea of a ἄμορφος ὕλη is already to be found in Wisdom of Solomon 11,17. Cp. H.A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass. 1948) I, 19.

soon rejected as unorthodox. The reason was that heretical sects were already preaching that 'formless matter' could be explained as the principle of evil, co-existing with God from eternity, in other words, denying the very basis of both the [373] Jewish and Christian doctrine of God. The early Fathers were solidly opposed to any dualistic theory.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, because the problem of matter (ύλη) plays such an important role in the exegesis of heaven and earth, it is necessary to show how the problem originated within this context. It is well known that Aristotle's scheme of matter and form had far reaching repercussions upon the thinkers of later times. Matter was said to be without form (ἄμορφος) and without quality (ἄποιος). In Genesis 1,1 earth is said to be ἄόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος. These terms were interpreted as synonymous with those used for matter, thus earth came to be understood as another word for matter. Justin's interpretation was in fact already based on this exegesis. The following survey of the terms heaven and earth will show how, in this respect, Justin's reading was followed by many other writers.

1. Although he is not a Christian author, Philo's commentary on the story of creation in Genesis cannot be overlooked in this survey. He was a faithful Jew, who endeavoured to explain his holy books in terms of Greek philosophy. Understandably he had a great influence on the early Christian authors, who made a similar effort.

According to Philo, the words heaven and earth in Genesis 1,1 cannot denote the realities usually indicated by these terms. For the creation of our heaven and earth are mentioned in a later phase of the story. In Genesis 1,1 heaven and earth point to the intelligible world, created by God as a model of the sensible world. Philo gives this theory in *De opificio mundi* c. 15–16. It is explained by Calcidius in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*; the reader may be referred to the critical apparatus to the edition of this text by J.H. Waszink.<sup>4</sup> Calcidius says that to Philo heaven and earth in

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Tertullian, in *Adv. Hermogenem*; Basil in *In Hexaëmeron* II; Ambrose, in *Exameron* 1; Augustine, in *Confessions* XII. See J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Paris 1964) 52ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus, Plato Latinus IV* (Londinii et Leidae 1962) 282.

Genesis 1,1 mean "immaterial and intelligible creatures, ideas and models of both this earth and the firmament".<sup>5</sup> Philo finds a confirmation of his theory in the fact that Genesis speaks also twice of the creation of man. To use again the words of Calcidius: "After all God first created intelligible man, the prototype of the human race, and only afterwards bodily man."<sup>6</sup> —It must be clear to everyone that Philo's interpretation originates from his acquaintance with the Platonic doctrine of ideas.

There is an interesting echo of this interpretation in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5,93,4: "The barbarian philosophy (*i.e.*, the Bible) knows of two worlds, the one noetic, the other sensible; the one prototype, the other image of the so-called model." And he adds in a typically [374] Philonian way: "And it attributes the one, as being noetic, to the monad, the sensible world to the number six."<sup>7</sup> Philo (*De opif. mundi* 15) remarks that Genesis does not speak of the *first* day but of day 'one', in order to denote that the day in which the noetic world was created has the nature of the monad (τὴν μονάδος φύσιν). And he treats extensively on the number six, *i.e.*, the number of the days in which the sensible world was created (*De opif. mundi* 15 and 89).

2. The counterpart of this Philonian interpretation is that which takes the words heaven and earth in their obvious sense, *viz.*, as denoting this sensible world. Heaven and earth are, so to speak, the two extreme parts of the sensible reality and can easily be understood as its resumé. This opinion is found in S. Basil's first homily *In Hexaëmeron*, ch. 7 (20 A). This author advocates a literal interpretation of the Bible text, as it also appears from his exegesis of "the earth was invisible and unfashioned". Here, too, he rejects the explanation of those who find in these words an indication of matter (*In Hex.* 2,2).

But, S. Basil observes, the words heaven and earth do not embrace the created reality in its totality. Genesis says that God

<sup>5</sup> *Quod ergo illud caelum prius quam cetera deus condidit quamve terram? Philo carentes corpore atque intelligibiles essentias fore censet, ideas et exemplaria tam siccae istius terrae quam soliditatis* (p. 282, 7–9 Wsz.).

<sup>6</sup> *Denique etiam hominem prius intelligibilem et exemplum archetypum generis humani, tunc demum corporeum factum a deo esse dicit* (p. 282, 9–11 Wsz.).

<sup>7</sup> Κόσμον τε αὐτὸς τὸν μὲν νοητὸν οἶδεν ἡ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία, τὸν δὲ αἰσθητὸν, τὸν μὲν ἀρχέτυπον, τὸν δὲ εἰκόνα τοῦ καλουμένου παραδείγματος· καὶ τὸν μὲν ἀνατίθησι μονάδι, ὡς ἂν νοητὸν, τὸν δὲ αἰσθητὸν ἑξάδι.

created heaven and earth “in the beginning”, that means in the beginning of time. But God had already created a world which does not exist in time, *i.e.*, the world of supramondane powers (ὑπερκόσμοι δυνάμεις), which is called ἡ ὑπερχρόνιος, ἡ αἰωνία, ἡ αἰδίοις. However, since his hearers were still beginners and infants in understanding, Moses did not speak about this world (*In Hex.* 1,5; 13 A).

3. Shortly after the publication of Basil's sermons his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, wrote a treatise on the same subject-matter. His explanation of the first verse of Genesis is as follows. Stating that God created heaven and earth “in the beginning” Genesis means to say that God created them ‘at once’ (the words ‘in the beginning’ are the equivalent of ‘as a beginning’, *i.e.*, as a starting point.<sup>8</sup>). Heaven and earth are an indication of the world in its totality. In other words, Genesis 1,1 says that God created *the whole world* (= heaven and earth) *at once* (= in the beginning); not, however, Gregory adds, the world in its perfect state, but in potentiality: τῇ μὲν δυνάμει τὰ πάντα ἦν ἐν τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ τὴν κτίσιν ὁρμῇ ..., ἐν ἐνεργείᾳ δὲ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον οὕτω ἦν (P.G. 44, 77D). This explanation reminds one, of course, of the Aristotelian theory of potentiality and act, or of that of matter and form. Heaven and earth seem to denote the matter of this sensible world. Gregory [375] moreover refers to the words “the earth was invisible and unfashioned” as an argument for his exegesis and it is known that these words were often interpreted as indicating matter. But on going into the details a somewhat different idea appears. Gregory speaks of this primordial reality as having a σπερματική δύναμις (77D) and elsewhere he uses the terms ἀφορμαί, αἰτίαι, δυνάμεις (72B) in order to characterize the nature of this reality. Gregory appears to have a more dynamic idea of this reality, which comes nearer to the Stoic ‘spermatic logoi’ than to the Aristotelian ὕλη.

According to Gregory, in Genesis 1,2 and the following verses Moses shows in the form of a narration (ἐν διηγήσεως εἶδει, 72C), how the germ of all things, which was sowed in the primordial creation developed according to a necessary, natural order. When Genesis says “God spoke”, this should not be taken literally but as

<sup>8</sup> See the interesting fragment of Acadius in R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois* (Roma 1959) 106; it is discussed in the article mentioned above, note 1.

an indication of the power (δύναμις) and the wisdom (σοφία) of God which were in the creation of the first day and which were the cause of that natural development.

Gregory's exegesis of Genesis 1,1 seems to imply that heaven and earth only indicate (the germ of) the sensible world. But later on, when he explains the separation of the waters above and under the firmament, he says that by the waters above the firmament Moses means a noetic and incorporeal world, "the fullness (sum) of all noetic powers" (τὸ τῶν νοητῶν δυνάμεων πλήρωμα, 81C). One wonders whether, according to Gregory, this noetic world was also embraced by the words heaven and earth in Genesis 1,1. The answer must probably be in the negative, since the explanation of heaven and earth as a 'spermatic power' is hardly applicable to a noetic reality. Thus the impression that Gregory was only referring to the sensible reality when he explained heaven and earth seems to be right.

4. There are, however, also interpreters who do find in heaven and earth of Genesis 1,1 an indication of the *whole* created reality, *i.e.*, the intellectual (or spiritual) as well as the corporeal. To them heaven denotes the intellectual world, earth the corporeal. But within this group several alternative interpretations can be discerned. The main distinction is between those who take heaven and earth as indicating the created reality *in its formed state* and those who consider them as indicating that reality *in its formless state, i.e.*, as matter.

a) As to this second alternative, it was already mentioned in the introduction, how the words "the earth was invisible and unfashioned" [376] evoked the idea of formlessness. But this formlessness seemed to concern the earth, *i.e.*, the corporeal world, only.

One should, however, bear in mind that in the Platonic philosophy also in the intelligible world, the κόσμος νοητός,<sup>9</sup> a distinction was made between matter and form. It is already found in Plato's doctrine, as it is criticized by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* A 6, 988 a 11–13, and Plotinus wrote a treatise 'On the twofold matter' (*Enn.* 2,4 Περὶ τῶν δύο ὑλῶν). In the noetic world there is multiplicity and change, and wherever these features are present,

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<sup>9</sup> This term, which stems from Philo, is found in Plotinus, for instance *Enn.* II,4,4, 8–9; V,9,9, 8. Cp. J. Horowitz, *Untersuchungen über Philons und Platons Lehre von der Welterschöpfung* (Marburg 1900) 74.

there must be a twofold principle, matter and form. Plotinus explains the formlessness in the intelligible world as follows: as long as the intelligible reality (*i.e.*, the second hypostasis) is in a movement *from* its source (*i.e.*, the One), it is indetermined, formless. It becomes determined as soon as it re-returns to its source.<sup>10</sup> Gregory of Nyssa also speaks of a twofold matter and of a twofold way of giving form. To him, in the intellectual world the formative element is in the impulses of choice. He says:<sup>11</sup> "For as we say that the Creator of the world by laying down some yielding material, capable of being acted upon, gave His creative being a field for exercise, in the case of things sensible skilfully investing the subject with various and multiform qualities for production, but in the case of intellectual essences giving shape to the subject in another way, not by qualities but by impulses of choice, so..." etc.<sup>12</sup>

Now as soon as heaven and earth were considered as indicating the whole created reality, the corporeal as well as the intellectual, and earth was explained as corporeal matter, it is quite understandable that heaven was explained as intellectual matter. This exegesis of Genesis 1,1 is found in Calcidius' commentary. Immediately after the discussion of Philo's opinion, treated above, he continues: "Others take it that the prophet, knowing that there are two kinds of realities,<sup>13</sup> an intelligible and a sensible, indicated the faculties of the two natures by the terms heaven and earth; by

<sup>10</sup> *Enn.* II,4,5, 32ff.: ἀόριστον δὲ καὶ ἡ κίνησις καὶ ἡ ἑτερότης ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου κάκεινον πρὸς τὸ ὁρισθῆναι δεόμενα· ὁρίζεται δὲ ὅταν πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιστραφῇ.

<sup>11</sup> *Contra Eunomium* 2,374, ed. Jaeger: ὡς γὰρ τὸν τοῦ παντὸς δημιουργόν φαμεν παθητικὴν τινα καὶ εὐεικτον ὕλην ὑποβαλλόμενον ἐνεργὸν ἑαυτοῦ τὴν δημιουργικὴν οὐσίαν ποιῆσαι, ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν τὰς ποικίλας τε καὶ πολυειδεῖς τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ ποιότητος πρὸς τὴν ἐκάστου τῶν γινομένων ἀπεργεσίαν τεχνικῶς ἐπιβάλλοντα, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν νοητῶν ἕτερον τρόπον οὐχὶ ποιήσιν, ἀλλὰ προαιρετικαῖς ὁρμαῖς διαμορφοῦντα τὸ ὑποκείμενον, οὕτως ... Trans. by W. Morre and H.A. Wilson in: *A Select Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, 2th series, Vol. V (Michigan 1892) 288.

<sup>12</sup> As to S. Augustine's view, see below.

<sup>13</sup> This translation is a correction of the one given in my *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources. A Chapter in the History of Platonism* (Leiden 1965) 61: "Knowing that all things have a double feature." Calcidius' text runs as follows: *Alii non ita, sed scientem prophetam duas esse species rerum omnium, alteram intelligibilem, alteram sensibilem, eas virtutes quae utramque naturam circumplexae contineant caelum et terram cognominasse, caelum quidem incorpoream naturam, terram vero, quae est substantia corporum, quam Graeci hylem vocant. Adstipulantur his ea quae sequuntur, "terra autem erat invisibilis et informis", hoc est silva corporea* (p. 282, 11-17 (Wsz.)). ... *Quod si facta est a deo silva corporea quondam informis, quam Scriptura terram vocat, non est, opinor, desperandum incorporei quoque generis fore intelligibilem silvam, quae caeli nomine sit nuncupata* (p. 283, 8-11 Wsz.).

heaven the immaterial nature, by earth that which is the substance of bodies and which the Greek call ὕλη. This interpretation is supported by the text which follows immediately: 'the earth, however, was invisible and shapeless.' This refers to corporeal matter ... But, if God made a corporeal matter which once was shapeless and which the bible calls earth, there is, I think, no reason for doubting that there is also an intelligible matter of immaterial nature, which is indicated by the name heaven."

The words *non est, opinor, desperandum* give the impression of being written by an author who goes new paths: in other words this interpretation [377] of heaven as referring to an intelligible matter seems to be put forward here for the first time. Now it is almost certain that this text of Calcidius is a translation of a fragment of the lost *Commentary on Genesis* by Origen. Thus Origen may have been the first thinker who referred to an intelligible matter in his exegesis of Genesis 1,1. Where he got the idea from can only be guessed, but perhaps he and Plotinus learned it from their common master, Ammonius Saccas.

b) According to others, heaven and earth in Genesis 1,1 referred to the intellectual and sensible reality *in their formed state*. This interpretation did not prevent them from explaining the words "the earth was invisible and unfashioned" as referring to matter. These words, according to them, concerned a state of affairs existing before what is stated in the first part of the verse. Their interpretation of the whole text is as follows: In the beginning, *i.e.*, in His Word, God made heaven and earth. The earth was (before it was made) invisible and unfashioned. In other words. God made heaven and earth out of formless matter already present. —This does, however, not mean that the formless matter was not created by God. Such an opinion would bring the interpreter in conflict with orthodoxy, as already mentioned. It only means that the first creation, *viz.*, that of matter, was not explicitly mentioned by Moses.

5. The most complete enumeration of the interpretations given to Genesis 1,1 is found in Augustine's *Confessions*, Book XII. After having said that, with regard to the origin of things, several true statements can be made and that the words of Genesis 1,1 can be understood in different ways, he gives the following summing up of possible interpretations of heaven and earth: ... *ex his ergo omnibus*

(1) *aliud sibi tollit qui dicit, in principio fecit caelum et terram, id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus intellegibilem atque sensibilem, vel spiritalem corporalemque creaturam* (i.e., heaven and earth refer to both the intelligible and the sensible reality in their formed state, this is the exegesis mentioned under 4b.); (2) *aliud qui dicit, in principio fecit deus caelum et terram, id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus universam istam molem corporei mundi huius, cum omnibus quas continet manifestis notisque naturis* (i.e., heaven and earth refer to the corporeal reality only in its formed state, this is an exegesis like that of S. Basil); (3) *aliud qui dicit, in principio fecit deus caelum et terram, id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit informem materiam creaturae spiritualis et corporalis* (evidently this explanation is found in Calcidius' commentary); [378] (4) *aliud qui dicit, in principio deus fecit caelum et terram, id est in verbo suo sibi coaeterno fecit deus informem materiam creaturae corporalis* (this exegesis comes near to that of Gregory of Nyssa).<sup>14</sup>

In ch. 21 Augustine presents also a survey of the interpretations of the following words of Genesis: "the earth was invisible and unfashioned and darkness was upon the deep." In this quotation one should notice the addition of the words "... and darkness was upon the deep". Augustine and other authors see in these words a reference to heaven in the first part of Genesis 1,1: they indicate the formless state of it, just as the words "the earth was invisible and unfashioned" indicate the formless state of earth. In *Confessions* XII,17 he says: ... *ea distinctione, ut terra invisibilis et incomposita intellegatur materies corporalis ante qualitatem formae, tenebrae autem super abyssum spiritualis materies ante cohibitionem quasi fluentis inmoderationis et ante inlumptionem sapientiae*. It should be noticed here, how Augustine understands the formgiving activity in the spiritual or intelligible world.<sup>15</sup>

The interpretations of the second part of Genesis 1,1 can be summarized as follows:

1. Earth and heaven (about which the text of Genesis 1,1 is speaking) was formless matter, either of the corporeal reality only, or of both the corporeal and the intellectual reality. These two exegeses correspond to the fourth and the third in the previous survey.

2. Earth and heaven were (before being made, as is told in Genesis 1,1) formless matter of either the corporeal reality only or

<sup>14</sup> *Confessions* XII,20.

<sup>15</sup> See also *De Genesi ad litteram* I,1,3.

of both the corporeal and the intellectual reality. These two interpretations correspond to the second and the first in the previous survey.<sup>16</sup> In ch. 22 Augustine stresses the fact that the opinions under 2 do not include that formless matter was uncreated, but that they only mean to say that this creation was not mentioned by the author of Genesis.

6. The question which interpretation was held by Augustine himself deserves special attention. J. Pépin, who devoted a long article to this problem 20 years ago,<sup>17</sup> comes to the conclusion that Augustine—though to him, as it was said above, several opinions were defensible—preferred the one according to which heaven and earth refer to *the matter of the intellectual reality in its formed state* and earth to the corporeal world *in its formless state*. Pépin mentions the texts which seem to point in the direction of the view of his opponents (p. 198), but then refers to [379] *Confessions* XII, where Augustine clearly distinguishes two phases in the coming into existence of the intellectual reality, a formless and a formed one. Now I cannot but agree with Pépin in this respect, and J. Guitton is wrong in saying that the spiritual creation is only form and contemplation.<sup>18</sup> But this does not necessarily mean that, according to Augustine, heaven in Genesis 1,1 refers to the spiritual reality in its formless state.

In several places in *Confessiones* XII Augustine sums up the various interpretations of heaven and earth. Pépin (p. 202) directs his special attention to those in chapters 17 and 28, where one finds the same enumeration as that treated above, and he thinks that Augustine's own opinion is among them. But this explanation meets serious objections, especially with regard to the survey in chapter 17. For there Augustine opposes the opinions of *others* to his own exegeses which he has given in the previous chapters. He writes: "For they (*i.e.*, my opponents) say: 'though all this that you say be true, yet did not Moses intend those two, when by revelation

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<sup>16</sup> In point of fact Augustine sums up five, not four interpretations, but with regard to the present division the first two of them belong together; they concern both the formless matter of the corporeal world only.

<sup>17</sup> Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression *Caelum Caeli* dans le livre XII des *Confessions* de S. Augustin, *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 23 (1953) 185–274.

<sup>18</sup> "La création spirituelle qui n'est que forme et contemplation". Quoted by Pépin, p. 198.

of the Spirit he said, In the beginning God created heaven and earth. He did not under the name of heaven, signify that spiritual or intellectual creation which always beholds the face of God : nor under the name of earth, that unshaped matter."<sup>19</sup>

Chapter 28 confirms this. There one finds again, as Pépin (p. 204) says, the four well-known interpretations. Heaven and earth can be the name 1. of the formless matter, either (a) of both the spiritual and corporeal reality or (b) of the corporeal only, or 2. of those realities in their formed state. But Augustine adds the following exegesis: *alius unam (naturam) formatam eandemque spiritalem caeli nomine, aliam informem corporalis materiae terrae nomine (esse credit cognominatam)*. This is precisely the opinion to which the text from ch. 17 quoted above referred as Augustine's own exegesis, viz., heaven is the name of that spiritual or intellectual creation which always beholds the face of God (the beholding of God's face is the activity which gives form to the spiritual reality), earth is that of unshaped matter.

Evidently Augustine wants to understand the words heaven and earth as indicating the two extremities of the created reality, on the one hand the highest formed reality, on the other the lowest formless reality. In ch. 13 he speaks of the two as *primitus formatum et penitus informe, illud caelum, sed caelum caeli, hoc vero terram, sed terram invisibilem et incompositam*. In ch. 7 he mentions the same two as ... *magnum quiddam et parvum quiddam ... unum prope te (Deum), alterum prope nihil, unum quo superior tu esses, alterum, quo inferius nihil esset*. This [380] latter quotation shows clearly that heaven indicates the highest reality under God; this must, of course, be a formed reality, not a formless one. In ch. 15 he speaks explicitly of heaven as a *natura formata*, and somewhat further on as *creata sapientia*,<sup>20</sup> *quae contemplatione luminis lumen est*. This contemplation is the form-giving activity, which was described above as beholding the face of God.

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<sup>19</sup> *Dicunt enim: "quamvis vera sint haec, non ea tamen duo Moyses intuebatur, cum revelante spiritu diceret: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram. non caeli nomine spiritalem vel intellectualem illam creaturam semper faciem dei contemplantem significavit, nec terrae nomine informem materiam"* (transl. W. Watts, in Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>20</sup> This created wisdom must be distinguished, Augustine says, from "that Wisdom, which is altogether equal and coeternal to the Father, by which all things were created" (*Conf.* 12,15). About this twofold wisdom, see also my *Calcidius on Matter* 57.

All this leads inevitably to the conclusion that Augustine in his *Confessions* prefers to interpret heaven in Genesis 1,1 as indicating the spiritual or intellectual reality in its *formed* state, which is called *Caelum caeli* elsewhere in the Bible. It does, however, not hinder him from making a distinction between matter and form in this reality.

It is not without interest that this opinion is also mentioned in a later work of S. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*,<sup>21</sup> and that it is found in no other author. This is not true of the four opinions, discussed above, which nearly all could be traced back to earlier thinkers.<sup>22</sup>

7. Finally a quite different exegesis of heaven and earth in Genesis 1,1 is found in S. Ambrose's *Exameron* 1,6,20. In general<sup>23</sup> his commentary largely depends on that of S. Basil, and also the present passage betrays the influence of the Cappadocian, but its overall meaning is different.

Having stated that heaven in Genesis 1,1 cannot mean the firmament, since the creation of the firmament is mentioned in one of the following verses, he continues: "for our present purpose it is sufficient to assert that in the beginning He created the heaven from which proceeds the preliminary cause of generation, and created the earth, in which existed the substance of generation,"<sup>24</sup> This text clearly reflects what S. Basil says in *In Hexaëmeron* 1,7 (20 A), where he meditates on the fact that heaven is mentioned first in the Genesis text: τῷ μὲν οὐρανῷ τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς γενέσεως ἀποδοῦς, τὴν δὲ γῆν δευτερεύειν φάμενος τῇ ὑπάρξει. Obviously Ambrose's *praerogativa generationis* reflects τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς γενέσεως, but by adding *et causa* he brings in a completely new element. This *causa* has its counterpart in the term *substantia* in the interpretation of earth. On itself the term *substantia* may be the rendering of

<sup>21</sup> 1,1,3: *An caelum intellegendum est creatura spiritualis, ab exordio quo facta est, perfecta illa et beata semper; terra vero corporalis materies adhuc imperfecta.*

<sup>22</sup> I, therefore, do not agree with Pépin when he states with regard to those four opinions: "*Le fait qu'on ne trouve ailleurs aucune trace de telles exégèses semble indiquer qu'Augustin ne fait là qu'exposer les diverses possibilités de comprendre le texte sacré qui se présentait à son esprit, en les mettant sur les lèvres d'adversaires imaginaires pour donner plus de vie au récit*" (p. 202).

<sup>23</sup> An exception should be made for the introduction to the first sermon; on this see the monumental work by J. Pépin, mentioned above, note 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Satis sufficit ad praesentem adsertationem quod in principio caelum fecerit, unde praerogativa generationis et causa, et terram fecerit, in qua esset generationis substantia.*

ὑπαρξίς, but it has got a completely different meaning. For what Ambrose means by *causa* and *substantia* becomes clear in the following text: *in his enim quattuor elementa creata sunt, ex quibus generantur omnia ista quae mundi sunt*. In other words *causa* and *substantia* stand here for the two principles, in which (= out of which) the four elements came to existence, namely form and matter. — As to the sources of this interpretation, the term *substantia* is often used as a name for matter; it may be a rendering of ὑποκείμενον. The [381] term *causa* for form is, for instance, found in Seneca, *Ep.* 65,2. The background of this exegesis of heaven and earth is perhaps the allegorical explanation of the mythological Οὐρανός and Γαία as the active and passive principle of things. —An exegesis like this is explicitly rejected by S. Basil, as far as matter is concerned, in *Hex.* 1,7 (20 A). See above.

This explanation is another way of expressing that heaven and earth in Genesis 1,1 embrace the created universe in its totality, which is indeed the original meaning of the text.

## “TERRA AUTEM STUPIDA QUADAM ERAT ADMIRATIONE”

### Reflections on a Remarkable Translation of Genesis 1:2a

The beginning chapters of Genesis, and the first verses of the first chapter in particular, have caused an endless variety of speculations of both the Jewish and the Christian exegetes.<sup>1</sup> The exegesis of the early Christian writers shows again and again what one may call the ‘encounter’ between Christian belief and Greek philosophy. Those thinkers, educated in Greek philosophy, read the Bible with their philosophical eyes. In this way they followed the example of the hellenizing Jew, Philo of Alexandria, whose way of approach had not found many followers among the Jews themselves. In the first verse not only the term ἀρχή had drawn the attention of those thinkers,<sup>2</sup> but also the verb ποιεῖν and the terms οὐρανός and γῆ.<sup>3</sup>

The present paper will deal with the exegesis of the first half of the second verse, in which the author states that the earth was *tohu* and *bohu*, and in particular on a remarkable rendering of this text mentioned by Calcidius in his commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*.

To almost all Christian exegetes the Bible was accessible in a Greek form only. The most authoritative translation was that of the Septuagint, in which the semi-verse under discussion ran as follows: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος.

A few authors, for instance saint Basil in his second homily *In Hexaemeron*, [459] gave a literal interpretation of this text: the earth was ‘invisible’, since it was hidden under the surface of the water, and it was ‘unordered’ or ‘unequipped’, because it was without the equipment of plants, trees etc.

Most interpreters, however, championed an allegoric interpretation of these words. Considering the problem, whether the idea of

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey, see *In Principio. Interprétations des premiers versets de la Genèse* (Études Augustiniennes), Paris 1973.

<sup>2</sup> See the first article in this volume: ‘Frühchristliche Bibelexegese. Der Anfang’.

<sup>3</sup> See my paper ‘The Early Christian Exegesis of ‘Heaven and Earth’ in Genesis 1,1’, in *Romanitas et Christianitas*. Festschrift J.H. Waszink, Amsterdam-London 1973, 371–382, printed in this volume, p. 94–106.

matter was found in the Holy Scripture, Origen observes in *De princ.* IV, 4,6 (Rufinus' translation): "*Quam plurimi sane putant ipsam rerum materiam significari in eo, quod in principio Genesis scriptum est a Moyse: 'In principio fecit deus caelum et terram, terra autem erat invisibilis et incompressa'; invisibilem namque et incompressam terram non aliud eis Moyses quam informem materiam visus est indicare*". To them 'earth' stood for 'matter', of which Aristotle had stated that it was ἀνείδεος and ἄμορφος. The two qualifications of earth in the Septuagint were understood as the equivalents of these Aristotelian epithets. The other Greek translations, viz. those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion were interpreted in a similar way. In Gregory of Nyssa's *Apologia in Hexaemeron* one finds them summed up and applied to matter.<sup>4</sup>

In his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* Calcidius, dealing with the problem of matter, mentions (the Latin translations of) the Septuagint, Aquila and Symmachus, and then continues as follows: "*Sed Origenes asseverat ita sibi ab Hebraeis esse persuasum, quod in aliquantum sit a vera proprietate derivata interpretatio; fuisse enim in exemplari: 'Terra autem stupida quadam erat admiratione'*".<sup>5</sup>

The meaning of this remarkable text must be that Origen, according to Calcidius, stated that the aforesaid interpretation (the three translations were, in his view, in fact essentially one interpretation; hence the singular) diverted considerably from the true sense of the Genesis text. The ground for this opinion were 'the Hebrews' who had informed him that the hebraic original had a different meaning, namely "the earth was lying speechless in a kind of admiration".—"Ita" is explained [460] by the words "*fuisse enim in exemplari*". The word "*exemplar*" sometimes means 'manuscript', but in the present case it cannot have that sense, since the reading of 'a manuscript' is not a convincing argument here; moreover, one would have expected then "*in exemplari aliquo*".

In my commentary on Calcidius' treatise on matter, twenty years ago, I could not throw much light on this text. I referred to the attempt of Fabricius to explain this rendering of the Hebrew. He stated that *tohu* and *bohu* both could have the significance of

<sup>4</sup> See M. Alexandre, 'L'exégèse de Gen. 1,1-2a dans l'In Hexaéméron de Grégoire de Nysse: deux approches du problème de la matière', in *Grégor von Nyssa und die Philosophie*, herausgegeben von H. Dörrie, M. Alterburger, U. Schramm, Leiden 1976, 159 ss.

<sup>5</sup> *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus* ed. J.H. Waszink (Plato Latinus IV). London-Leiden, 1962, 280,9-11.

*admiratio*. But this rather vague indication did not help much. Hence it could happen that Waszink, in the *apparatus fontium* of his famous edition, stated: "*de hac versione nihil invenire potui*".

Calcidius' assertion is remarkable for several reasons: 1. The rendering itself is, at least at first sight, very strange; 2. The assertion that Origen, the author of the Hexapla, approved this translation is amazing; 3. One wonders who were the Hebrews who are said to be Origen's witnesses.

As to the rendering itself, I had already understood that it was not so strange and had nothing to do with a lack of knowledge of the Hebrew, sometimes imputed to Origen.<sup>6</sup> The terms *tohu* and *bohu* indicate a state of wilderness and disorder. Normally these words are taken in a 'physical' sense. The Hebrews under discussion, and Origen after them, did nothing else than give those terms a 'psychical' meaning. According to them, the two words indicated a state of 'mental disorder'. The earth was 'bewildered', 'perplexed', hence "*stupida admiratione*". And in the allegorical context, in which earth stood for matter, matter was affected by that feeling. In other words, allegory was coupled with personification here.

Now this way of interpreting the text of Genesis 1:2a was not unknown in rabbinic circles. Mme Alexandre has drawn our attention to this fact in her article on Gregory of Nyssa's interpretation of this Genesis text (see note 4). She refers to the English translation of the *Midrash on Genesis*, by M. Friedman, which contains the following [461] rendering of Genesis 1:2a: "The earth sat bewildered and astonished". Origen seems to refer to this rendering and all our problems seem to be solved: the translation mentioned by Calcidius was, in fact, an allegoric interpretation, which could, of course, not have a place in the *Hexapla*; the Hebrews were the rabbis, who are often referred to by Origen, when he treats on the significance of hebrew terms.

However, the proper translation of the Genesis text under discussion in the *Midrash* and in Origen may be similar, the explanations based on the renderings are quite different. In the *Midrash* the

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<sup>6</sup> See for instance F. Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra* (TU 41-42), Leipzig 1914, Teil I, p. 36-37. For the opposite view see N. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews. Studies in Jewish-Christian relations in third-century Palestine*, Cambridge 1976, 7. See also G. Sgherri, 'A proposito di Origene e la lingua ebraica', *Augustinianum* 14, 1974, 223-257.

earth is astonished about the fact that, while she was created together with the heaven, her destiny was so different from that of the heaven. While the heaven was adorned with eternal life, she (the earth) was condemned to mortality. This idea was illustrated by two similes. One of them runs as follows: "This may be compared to the case of a king who bought two slaves on the same bill of sale and at the same price. One he ordered to be supported at the public expense, while the other he ordered to toil for his bread. The latter sat bewildered and astonished: 'Both of us were bought at the same price' exclaimed he, 'yet he is supported from the treasury whilst I have to gain my bread by my toil!' Thus the earth sat bewildered and astonished, saying 'The celestial beings (sc. the angels) and the terrestrial ones (sc. man) were created at the same time: yet the celestial beings are fed by the radiance of the *Skechina*, whereas the terrestrial beings, if they do not toil, do not eat. Strange it is indeed'".<sup>7</sup>

Origen's explanation is as follows; "*stupidae vero ex admiratione significatio animae vim quandam similitudinemque declarat, siquidem opificis et auctoris sui maiestate capta stuperet*".<sup>8</sup> Here the earth, standing for matter, lies in admiration being perplex because of the majesty of the Creator. Obviously this explanation is greatly different from the one given by the hebrew teachers, the main difference being that, while the Hebrews only personified the earth, Origen put the personification<sup>9</sup> in an allegory.[462]

The difference between the two explanations manifests itself in the different feelings of the earth. In the rabbinic exegesis she is stupified about her being treated in such an inferior manner. In Origen's explanation she is stupified because of her admiration of the majesty of the Creator. The feeling of the earth in rabbinic exegesis could hardly be qualified as "*admiratio*".

Origen's exegesis of the Genesis text under discussion is much more cognate with what a Greek philosopher, according to Calcidius, stated about matter, namely that it "willingly yields to the majesty of the Maker". This formula, that seems to come from

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<sup>7</sup> *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis I.* Translated into English with notes glossary and indices under the editorship of Rabbi Dr. H. Friedman and Maurice Simon M.A. London-Bournemouth <sup>2</sup>1951, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. Waszink, 283,6-8; *auctoritatis* (instead of *auctoris*) is a mistake.

<sup>9</sup> The words "*animae vim quandam similitudinemque declarat*" draw the attention of the reader to the personification.

Numenius<sup>10</sup> shows the same personification of matter as in Origen. The only difference is in the nature of the feelings of matter: in the one case it is yielding and obeying, in the other it is "*stupida admiratione*".

Our conclusion, so far, might be that Origen's observation mentioned by Calcidius has its roots in the rabbinic personification of *earth* and in the Numenian personification of *matter*.

There is, however, a context which shows even a more striking agreement with Origen's exegesis. Here one finds the idea of matter and the "*stupida admiratio*" together. And although I am not able to prove that Origen has been influenced from this side, it seems worth while to draw the attention of the reader to this complex of ideas in these reflections on the Calcidian text.

The complex of ideas meant here is that of the Gnosis, particularly the Valentinian Gnosis, as it is described by Irenaeus in the first part of his *Adversus haereses*;<sup>11</sup> he is followed by Tertullian in his *Adversus Valentinianos*.

The Valentinian Gnosis is famous because of its elaborated doctrine on the widespread inner development of the divine nature. This development is realised in emanations, known as Aeons, having abstract names expressing apparently the different aspects of the divine nature. Head of all is the Προπάτωρ, also called Βυθός, who forms a pair with Ἐννοια, also named Χάρις or Σιγή. From these proceed Νοῦς and Ἀλήθεια, who generate Λόγος and Ζωή, and these give existence [463] to Ἀνθρωπος and Ἐκκλησία. The last two pairs, in their turn, produce ten respectively twelve other Aeons. Thus altogether there are thirty, that is fifteen pairs of Aeons. They form the *Pleroma*, the divine reality in its full development. *Adv. haer.* I,1,3 says: τοῦτο τὸ ἀόρατον καὶ πνευματικὸν κατ' αὐτοὺς Πλήρωμα.

The last couple, generated by *Anthropos* and *Ekklesia*, was *Theletos* and *Sophia*. While the other Aeons remained within their prescribed limits,—there was a possibility for aberration in all those coming after the first couple of Aeons—, the youngest, i.e. the female partner of the last pair, Sophia exceeded the limit. She

<sup>10</sup> See my *Calcidius on Matter*, 64 and the *apparatus fontium* in Waszink's edition.

<sup>11</sup> In the first issue of *VC G.* Quispel wrote a pioneer article on this text. More recently the problems concerning this text were discussed thoroughly by G.C. Stead, *The Valentinian Myth of Sophia*, *JTS N.S.* 20, 1969, 75–104.

was moved by passion "beyond the embrace of her partner". This passion existed in "searching after the Father" (τὸ δὲ πάθος εἶναι ζήτησιν τοῦ πατρός. *Adv. haer.* I,2,2). She desired what was an impossibility for her, namely the understanding of the greatness of the Father, something attainable only for the Only-begotten, *i.e.* the *Nous*; to all other Aeons the Father was unknowable. Because of this desire Sophia was in danger literally from being swallowed up and losing her own existence. Then, however, she encountered the power of "Ὁρος, Measure, which consolidates all things. She was then convinced of the impossibility of knowing the Father and so "returned to herself" and laid aside "her previous Plan together with the *pathos* coupled with it, originating from that speechless amazement" (τὴν προτέραν ἐνθύμησιν σὺν τῷ ἐπιγινομένῳ πάθει ἐκ τοῦ ἐκπλήκτου ἐκείνου θαύματος). From this it appears that Sophia's *pathos* originates in a ἐκπληκτον θαῦμα, which is, without doubt, the exact equivalent of "*stupida admiratio*".

But, one may object, in the text from Calcidius this mood is ascribed to the earth (= matter), in Irenaeus it belongs to Sophia. In Greek thought, it is true, these realities are completely different indeed. In the Valentinian Gnosis, however, there is a close relationship between the two, as will appear from what follows.

As was said above, Sophia *laid aside* her previous Plan originating in the speechless amazement. This has to be understood literally. Sophia herself returns to the pure and stable state in which she was before; she returns into the Pleroma. But her Plan is *laid aside* and so becomes a reality in itself, which is ἄμορφον and ἀνείδεον (*Adv. haer.* I,2,4). (One recognizes the epithets of matter).

Elsewhere Irenaeus says that Sophia escaped from boundlessness and [464] formlessness, but the Plan, laid aside by her, got outside the Pleroma. The Plan, also called *Achamoth* (Greek transcription of the hebraic name for wisdom) was in the dark and was ἄμορφος and ἀνείδεος. Again one meets the two typical epitheta of matter: Τὴν ἐνθύμησιν τῆς ἄνω Σοφίας ἦν καὶ Ἀχαμῶθ καλοῦσιν, ἀφορισθεῖσαν τοῦ Πληρώματος σὺν τῷ πάθει, λέγουσιν ἐν σκιᾷ καὶ κενώματος τόποις ἐκβεβρᾶσθαι κατὰ ἀνάγκην. ἔξω γὰρ φωτὸς ἐγένετο καὶ Πληρώματος, ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνείδεος (*Adv. haer.* I,4,1). See also *Adv. haer.* I,3,1, where the situation of Sophia is described as ὡς ἐν πολλῇ ὕλῃ.

In *Adv. haer.* I,1,3 Irenaeus states that the *pathos* of Sophia and her return into the Pleroma has been expressed in a *mythos*. This runs

as follows: when Sophia attempted the impossible, she gave birth to a formless being (ἄμορφον οὐσίαν) and seeing it she was filled with fear, sadness and *perplexity* (φόβος, λυπή, ἔκπληξις). As well as perplexity (= speechless amazement) there are two other moods. In *Adv. Haer.* I,4,1 Achamoth has the same three moods and in I,5,4 Irenaeus asserts explicitly that matter is a composition of those three: ἐκεῖ οὖν τὴν ὑλικὴν οὐσίαν ἐκ τριῶν παθῶν συστήναι, φόβον τε καὶ λυπῆς καὶ ἀπορίας. (Elaborating this statement he replaces ἀπορία by ἔκπληξις). Thus matter could be defined as the hypothesized moods of Sophia, or otherwise stated: matter is Sophia in so far she has strayed from the right path.

In his treatise "Against the Valentinians" Tertullian expresses the same idea in the following way: "*Nullus tamen Sophiae exitus vacuit; omnes aerumnas eius operantur, siquidem et illa tunc conflictatio in materiae originem pervenit, ignorantia pavor maeror substantiae fiunt*".<sup>12</sup> The "*exitus*" of Sophia is her leaving the Pleroma; to Sophia no "*exitus*" was "open", that means: she could not "disappear". This is explained by the following words: all her troubles are active *i.e.* they result in something, and that "something" is matter. The moods of Sophia become a substance.

About Achamoth, also called Mother, which appeared to be the 'Plan' of Sophia together with her *pathos*—so it is, in fact, the [465] equivalent of matter—Irenaeus states "This Mother is also called Ogdoon, *Sophia, Earth, Jerusalem ...*" (*Adv. haer.* I,5,3). The evil product of Sophia is itself called Sophia and similarly Earth. Tertullian, *Adv. Valent.* c. 21,1 observes: "*Interim tenendum Sophiam cognominari et Terram et Matrem*". Thus instead of stating that Sophia was struck by an ἔκπληκτον θαῦμα (= *stupida admiratio*), one could also state that the Earth was thus struck. This is exactly what the translation under discussion of Genesis I:2a has.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Adv. Valent.* 10,2–3. Ed. Aldo Marastoni, Padova 1971. In the CSEL edition, reprinted in the Corpus Christianorum, Kroyman remodeled this text after the example of the Irenaeus text. But Tertullian was not the man to transcribe the author he was following. He prefers to give a more pointed expression to the ideas of his example.

<sup>13</sup> The qualification of Sophia's mood as ἔκπληκτον θαῦμα is found only once in Irenaeus. Elsewhere one finds ἔκπληξις, as was mentioned above. Here the element θαῦμα is absent. In *Adv. haer.* Irenaeus uses the verbe ἐκστήναι (καὶ ἀπορῆσαι). Sophia's leaving the Pleroma is a kind of ἐκστασις (cf. Tertullian's "*exitus*"). Now there is an interesting observation of Rufinus in his translation of Origenes' *In Numeros*, homilia 27: "*Non possumus in Latina lingua uno sermone exprimere verbum Graecum, quod illi ἐκστασιν vocant, id est, cum pro alicuius*

How to explain this striking agreement? One may, of course, think of a fortuitous agreement of two texts which have no relationship at all. But it is also possible that the Hebrews mentioned by Origen had some connection with those gnostic speculations. The identity of the Hebrews referred to by Origen is different on different occasions. One should discern between the cases in which he adduces the Hebrews as witnesses for the signification of Hebrew *names* and those in which he refers to the exegesis of Bible texts by Jewish scholars. In the first case Origen's witnesses apparently are learned Jews or the writings of learned Jews. In the case of an exegesis the situation is more complicated. Sometimes he has Jewish rabbis in view, sometimes he refers to Christian Jews. A revealing text is *Selecta in Ezechiël*, ch. 9 (PG 13, 800D–801A). There Origen discusses Ezekiel 9,4, which speaks, according to the versions of Aquila and Theodotion, of putting the mark  $\Theta\alpha\upsilon$  on the foreheads of those who groan and lament. (The Septuagint speaks of putting a mark only). Origen states, that having asked the Hebrews whether they could give some hereditary learning about that *Thau*, he has got three answers. The first had said that the *Thau*, being the last letter of the (Hebrew) alphabet, indicated 'perfection'. The second had stated that the *Thau*, being the first letter of the name Thora, symbolized those who had lived in accordance with the Law. The third—and he was one who also [466] believed in Christ—had said that in old times the letter *Thau* looked like the cross.<sup>14</sup> thus this text of Ezekiel predicted the habit of the Christians to sign themselves with the token of the cross on their forehead, which they all do at the beginning of all kinds of activities, particularly at the beginning of prayers and holy reading.<sup>15</sup>

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*magnae rei admiratione obstupescit animus*" (PG 12,969 B–C). Perhaps ἐκπληκτον θαῦμα is a Greek paraphrase of ἔκστασις.

<sup>14</sup> One of the archaic forms of the semitic *taw* (predecessor of the Greek *Tau*) had, indeed, almost the form of a cross, the only difference being that the cross-beam was not always exactly horizontal. See L.H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece. A study of the origin of Greek alphabet and its development from the eighth to the fifth centuries B.C.* Oxford 1961, 34 and A. Heubeck, *Schrift* (Archeologia Homerica, 3 Heft IX), Göttingen 1972. Origen's way of indicating this letter ( $\Theta\alpha\upsilon$ ,  $\Theta\omega\rho\acute{\alpha}$ ) is not correct, since the *taw* gets aspiration only after a vowel. But also elsewhere one finds similar confusions. (I thank professor P.A.H. de Boer, Oegstgeest, for this information.) In later times the (Greek) *Tau* became the indication of the cross. See, for instance, Thomas of Celano's *Tractatus de Miraculis S. Francisci Assisiensis*, Quaracchi, 1928, par. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. G. Barty, 'Les traditions juives dans l'œuvre d'Origène', *RB* 34, 1925, 241.

This text shows clearly that Origen's witnesses could be learned Jews as well as Jewish Christians. One might surmise that in the present case his informants were *gnostic* Jews or Jewish Christians who explained the rabbinic rendering of Genesis 1:2a in a gnostic way.

Such a surmise does not include the assumption that Origen was an adherent of the gnostic way of thinking. It does mean that this gnostic idea was attractive to him because of his well-known inclination to all kinds of allegory. He was always looking for a deeper sense of the Holy Scripture.

But however the relationship of these similarly sounding texts may be, it was a pleasure to the present author to offer these reflections to the gnostic scholar, to whom this collection of studies has been dedicated.

“AN APPROPRIATE BEGINNING”  
The Opening Passage of Saint Basil’s *In Hexaemeron*

The creation story of Genesis was one of the main subjects of exegesis in early christianity. It was here that the christian authors, who were all educated in Greek philosophy, came face to face with problem they had met everywhere during their philosophical education, namely that of the ἀρχή or ἀρχαί of things. This confrontation resulted in a special kind of exegetical works, the so-called hexaemeral literature.

The most famous work of this kind is the exegesis by St. Basil of Caesarea, in the form of a series of nine homilies delivered during one week of Lent, probably that of the last year of his life, 378.<sup>1</sup> These sermons, which had as their general purpose “the edifying of the church” (I Cor. 14.12, cf. Hom. 1.8), explore all kinds of philosophic problems. One can hardly imagine that the unlettered people, who constituted the majority of his audience, could follow their bishop.

The homily consists of an introductory chapter, followed by the proper exegesis of the text of Genesis 1.1, and ending with a peroration. The exegesis consists of two parts: in the first Basil deals with the words ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός, in the second with τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. In the first he discusses successively the concepts “God”, “beginning” and “to make”, the second of which receives by far the most extensive treatment.

In the introductory chapter Basil deals successively with the nature of *the text*, the disposition required in *the hearer* and, more extensively, with the excellence of *the author*, Moses. The purpose of this present paper is to investigate the line of thought behind the words of the opening sentences of the sermon. After pronouncing the Genesis text Basil begins as follows:

Πρέπουσα ἀρχὴ τῷ περὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου συστάσεως μέλλοντι διηγείσθαι, ἀρχὴν τῆς τῶν ὁρωμένων διακοσμώσεως προθεῖναι τοῦ λόγου. Οὐρανοῦ γὰρ καὶ γῆς ποίησις παραδίδοσθαι μέλλει, οὐκ αὐτομάτως

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<sup>1</sup> See Jean Bernardi, *La prédication des Pères Cappadociens*. Le prédicateur et son auditoire (Paris 1968) 42–48. E. Amand de Mendieta, ‘Les neuf homélies de Basile de Césarée sur l’Hexaéméron’, *Byzantion* 48 (1978) 366–7.

συνενεχθείσα, ὡς τινες ἐφαντάσθησαν, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν λαβοῦσα.

Before going into the interpretation (translations) of these sentences by other authors, it seems appropriate to attempt a literal rendering: "It is an appropriate beginning for the man who is about to narrate the constitution of the kosmos, to put a beginning to the ordering of the visible world at the head of his treatise. For a making of heaven and earth that did not take place spontaneously, as some have imagined, but one that drew its principle from God, must be handed on".

At first sight the meaning of these words seems to be rather obvious. Judging from the second sentence, which is of an explanatory nature, one supposes that Basil intends to draw attention to the fact that the first sentence of Genesis clearly pronounces the creatorship of God. Furthermore in so doing he opposes the theory that the world results from a spontaneous process, as was posed, for example, by Epicurus. This agrees in fact with what the reader expects. The doctrine of the creating God is characteristic of the Bible.

One may object that with this doctrine the Bible was opposed not only to the Epicureans but almost to every branch of Greek philosophy. But perhaps Basil was not thinking of the Epicureans alone. He may have followed the example of Origen, who asserted that all those who assume an uncreated matter introduce the element of chance. *De princ.* II. 1.4: *Hanc ergo materiam, quae tanta ac talis est, ut et sufficere ad omnia mundi corpora, quae esse deus voluit, queat ... nescio quomodo tanti et tales viri ingenitam, id est non ab ipso deo factam conditore omnium putauerunt, sed fortuitam quandam eius naturam virtutemque duxerunt.* The same idea is found also in Eusebius' *Praep. Ev.*, where he states that the consequence of not accepting a God creator is a world resulting by chance. In *Praep. Ev.* I. 7.16, after quoting a long fragment of Diodorus Siculus on Greek cosmogony he continues: Τοσαῦτα μὲν ὁ δηλωθεὶς συγγραφεὺς, οὐδὲ μέχρις ὀνόματος τοῦ θεοῦ μνημονεύσας ἐν τῇ κοσμογονίᾳ, συντυχικὴν δέ τινα καὶ αὐτόματον εἰσηγησάμενος τὴν τοῦ παντὸς διακόσμησιν. And in I.8.13, after another quotation, he asserts that this is the view-point of a great number of Greek philosophers: Τοιαύτη καὶ τῶν πανσόφων Ἑλλήνων τῶν δὴ φυσικῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπικληθέντων ἡ περὶ τῆς συστάσεως τοῦ παντὸς καὶ τῆς πρώτης κοσμογονίας διάληψις, οὐ δημιουργόν, οὐ ποιητὴν τινα τῶν ὅλων ὑποστησαμένων, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὅλως

θεοῦ μνήμην ποιησαμένων, μόνη δὲ τῇ ἀλόγῳ φορᾷ καὶ τῇ αὐτομάτῳ κινήσει τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ παντὸς ἀναθειμένων. The “automatic movement” does not refer only to the Epicureans but to all Greek philosophers who did not accept a God creator. Did Basil have this opposition in mind in his opening sentences? When he asserts that it is an appropriate beginning to put *a beginning* of the ordering of the visible world at the head of his treatise, does he by this “*beginning*” point to God, the creator?

The author of the most recent modern translation of Basil’s text, Stanislaus Giet, has understood him in this way. He renders as follows: “Il convient de prime abord à qui va décrire l’organisation du monde, de mentionner, en tête de son discours, le principe de l’ordre qui règne dans le monde visible”. Of course, “the principle of order” is God. But this translation effaces a difficulty in the Greek text. Basil does not speak of “*the beginning*” but of “*a beginning*”. Could the formula “to put *a beginning* to the ordering of the world” be an adequate description of the characteristic doctrine of the Bible, namely that of a God creator? Does such a formula not hold of other doctrines as well? P.ex., does Plotinus, do the Stoics not put *a beginning* to the ordering of the visible world?

That is perhaps why the earliest translator of Basil’s homilies, Eustathius, gives a quite different interpretation of the opening sentence. His Latin translation of about 400 runs as follows: *Conveniens exordium de mundi compositione narraturus adsumpsit decorationem gestorum operum, sui faciens sermonis initium* (See the critical edition by E. Amand de Mendieta et S.Y. Rudberg: Eustathius. *Ancienne version latine des neuf homélies sur l’Hexaéméron de Basile de Césarée*. T.U. 66. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1958). According to Eustathius, the appropriate beginning lies in the fact that the author of Genesis put the *diakosmesis* of the world at the head of his treatise. To him the central idea of Genesis 1:1 is the *ordering* of the world, and by this idea it is diametrically opposed to a theory like that of Epicurus. As to the construction of the sentence, Eustathius obviously interprets τῆς διακοσμήσεως as an explicative genitive to ἀρχήν, and he understands ἀρχήν προθεῖναι τοῦ λόγου as one expression meaning “to begin his treatise”. According to Eustathius, Basil states that Moses gave a beginning to his treatise, namely the *ordering*.<sup>2</sup> In this way the problem of the indefinite ἀρχήν has, of

<sup>2</sup> Eustathius was followed by B. Jackson, who made, to the best of my knowledge, the only English translation of the Basilian text, in “A select

course, disappeared. But now the statement becomes somewhat peculiar. The "appropriate beginning" lies in an idea not mentioned explicitly in the Genesis text, namely the *diakosmesis*.

The two interpretations discussed above have in common an understanding that the appropriate beginning refers to the general content of Genesis 1.1; in the first case it concerns the creatorship of God, in the second the result of the divine activity. Both interpretations are not without serious difficulties.

There is, however, another way of understanding this initial phrase, and, what is more, a most obvious one, which seems to have been overlooked hitherto by all interpreters. One should listen attentively to what Basil says in actuality. He starts his homily with pronouncing solemnly the Genesis text: '὘ν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, and then he continues: "It is an appropriate ἀρχή for him who is going to deal with the composition of the world, to put an ἀρχή at the head of his treatise". In other words, it is an appropriate beginning to begin with an ἀρχή. Now Moses begins with the word ἀρχή. To what else could Basil refer in that remarkable opening sentence than to this proper beginning of the Genesis text, namely ἐν ἀρχῇ?

But, one may object (without doubt the reason why the interpreters have not thought of this possibility), what particular value could Basil attach to this adjunct of time? The answer is that for Basil this is not simply an adjunct of time. To follow Basil in his speculations one should realise that in his day the way of interpreting texts was different from ours. He did not start from the supposition that a text had one single meaning. He was much more inclined to handle every word of a sentence like a precious stone, which he turned over and over always discovering new facets.<sup>2a</sup> He asked whether each and all of those different meanings were applicable in that particular case. Now in the view of the man who was educated in Greek philosophy the term ἀρχή had many facets, many meanings. Thus an understanding of Basil must begin with a very precise rendering of the Genesis text, and the recognition that ἐν ἀρχῇ has no article. In his view Moses says: "In a beginning God created the heaven and the earth", or

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Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", ser. 2, vol. 8 (1895): "It is right that anyone beginning to narrate the formation of the world should begin with the good order which reigns in visible things".

<sup>2a</sup> Cf. H. Dörrie in *Antike und Abendland* 16 (1970) 92.

"God created the heaven and the earth in a beginning". Now one follows him more easily when he continues: "It is an appropriate beginning for Moses to start with *a beginning*". The question rising now is, of course, what this "beginning" is.

Here it is useful for the modern reader to remember that Basil's predecessors had already given several interpretations of this ἐν ἀρχῇ. The most remarkable exegesis, perhaps also the oldest one, is found in (the Latin translation of) the first homily of Origen on Genesis. He begins his sermon asserting that the *principium* of Genesis 1.1 should not be interpreted in a temporal sense but as a reference to Christ, the first-born of all creation: "*In principio creavit deus caelum et terram*". *Quod est omnium principium nisi dominus noster et salvator omnium Christus Jesus, "primogenitus omnis creaturae"* (Col. 1.15)? *In hoc principio, hoc est in verbo suo deus caelum et terram fecit, sicut et evangelista Joannes in initio evangelii sui ait dicens: "In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil"* (Joh. 1.1–3). *Non ergo hic temporale aliquod principium dicit; sed in principio id est in Salvatore factum esse dicit caelum et terram et omnia quae facta sunt* (P. G. 12,145 C).

Basil does not follow in Origen's footsteps in this exegesis. In the first part of the homily he dwells extensively on the meaning of the term ἀρχή, that "beginning" in which God created heaven and earth. The chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to this problem. He first interprets ἀρχή in a temporal sense, and discerns in it the four ἀρχαί, principles, found by Aristotle in every process of alteration. But he discusses also the possibility of a timeless beginning. Further detail here is unnecessary.<sup>3</sup> It must be evident by now that for Basil ἀρχή was a heavy-loaded term, and that for this reason he could draw the attention of his hearers to the ἐν ἀρχῇ of Genesis 1.1 from the very beginning of his homily. Moses, he states, did well to put *a beginning* of the ordering of the world at the head of his creation story. Hence he asserts: "God created the heaven and the earth in a beginning".

In the second sentence of the sermon Basil explains why this beginning is so appropriate. The general idea is clear: by using the formula ἐν ἀρχῇ Moses opposes those who ascribe the constitution of the world to some spontaneous activity.

<sup>3</sup> See the first article in this volume: 'Frühchristliche Bibelexegese. Der Anfang'.

The question whether the world had a beginning had been a much discussed problem in ancient philosophy. The "creation story" of Plato's *Timaeus* had caused weighty disagreement among the Platonists themselves. Only a minority maintained a literal interpretation of the story and assumed a beginning of the world order (Plutarch, Atticus). To most interpreters the story had only a didactic purpose and should not be understood literally. In Aristotle's footsteps they stated that the world had no beginning and no end.

Moses' statement "God created heaven and earth in a beginning" or otherwise said "God gave a beginning to heaven and earth", was of course a clear rallying cry against the last group of thinkers.

But does Basil have in view these philosophers when he speaks of adherents of the creation as a spontaneous process? At first sight one could think that the Epicureans are meant. In their theory the αὐτόματον plays an important role indeed. Obviously Giet has understood Basil in this way: He translates "Car l'origine au ciel et de la terre ne doit pas être présentée comme *la rencontre spontanée des éléments*, ainsi que certains se le sont imaginé: elle a sa cause en Dieu". Basil, however, speaks of a *poiesis* which *took place spontaneously*.<sup>4</sup>

In my view, Basil is not opposing here thinkers like the Epicureans who did not assume any kind of *poiesis*, let alone a cause, but those who did assume some cause of that kind but a cause that worked spontaneously. In the 7th chapter of the present homily he explains the verb ἐποίησεν and states that this verb is used against those who fancied (τῶν φαντασθέντων!) that the world has not been *made by* God but has come to existence spontaneously (αὐτομάτως), as were it a shadow of his might. Against those, Basil says, is it that Moses states: God made heaven and earth in a beginning. This "making" is not a spontaneous process, Basil states. (One should notice that in the case of a spontaneous process the term ποιήσις is, of course, not used in a strict sense). In a remarkable note Pépin has collected a number of parallels to this

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<sup>4</sup> Giet's rendering is in several respects far from exact: he translates ποιήσις with "l'origine", which is a wrong noun and a wrong article, and the predicative rendering of the participles is not correct either. As to the translation of the last part of the sentence, see below.

text of Basil and he comes to the conclusion that the essential elements of the doctrine opposed by Basil are found in Plotinus.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, Basil states, the “making” of the world did not take place spontaneously, but ... What do we expect Basil is saying now? If our interpretation is correct, he must say something like “it got its *arche* from God”.

Basil’s actual formulations is: παρὰ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν λαβοῦσα. Giet translates: “elle a sa cause *en Dieu*”. But Basil state that the making “has drawn its cause *from God*”.

Now one should recall to mind that since Aristotle ἀρχή and αἰτία were equivalents.<sup>6</sup> Thus the formula “has drawn its ‘cause’ from God” is the equivalent of “has drawn its ‘beginning’ from God”.

An interesting confirmation of the interchangeability of the terms ἀρχή and αἰτία is found in the commentary of Didymus the Blind on the ἐν ἀρχῇ of Genesis 1.1. In the badly damaged text one reads the following paraphrasis on the Genesis text: ἐν αἰτίᾳ ὑπῆρχεν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ τῆς σοφίας αἰτίας τῆς ὑπάρξεως καὶ αὐτῶν καταστάσης.<sup>7</sup> “The heaven and earth existed in an *aitia* (a cause), the Wisdom having taken the function of cause of the existence of these entities as well”. (The Wisdom = the Logos = Christ, cf. Origen’s exegesis mentioned above). And Didymus, too, opposes to those who assume a spontaneous coming to existence of the world, without beginning: οὐ γὰρ ἀγεννήτως ἢ αὐτομάτως ὑπῆρχεν ὁ κόσμος.

Eustathius gives an exact rendering of this second sentence: *Caeli enim terraeque factura referenda est non sponte formata, ut quidam opinati sunt, sed ex deo causas propriae nancta substantiae*. He only translates the singular τὴν αἰτίαν by the plural *causas*. Perhaps he did this in order to avoid the identification of God and *causa*. He knew, moreover, that Basil would give the ἀρχή (αἰτία) several meanings, so that a plural was in agreement with Basil’s intention.

Our conclusion must be that the opening passage of Basil’ first homily in the creation story shows a clear confrontation of the

<sup>5</sup> See J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne* (Paris 1964) 279, n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> For the relevant texts and literature, see J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique ...*, p. 60, n. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Didyme l’Aveugle, *Sur la Genèse*. Texte inédit, d’après un papyrus de Toura. Introduction, Édition, Traduction et Notes par Pierre Nautin, avec la collaboration de Louis Doutreleau, Sources Chrétiennes, 233 (Paris 1976) 32–34.

christian belief with Greek philosophy. The central idea of this confrontation was the concept of ἀρχή.

One may ask whether Basil's audience understood all those philosophical implications. However, I think a distinction should be made here. The greater part of the hearers, consisting of the common people, must have understood that Moses' words "God created heaven and earth in a beginning" or "God gave a beginning to his creation" meant a confrontation with Greek philosophy. The more educated part of the audience must have understood also the deeper implications of his statements.

In the *Apology* of his brother's *Hexaemeron* Gregory states that Basil's words were both understandable to the uneducated element of his audience and satisfying to the more cultured because they went into the implications of the text and made comparisons with many doctrines of the "outward" philosophy. Hence he was understood by the many, and admired by the intelligentsia.<sup>8</sup> This, I think, was exactly what happened at the opening sentences of Basil's first homily.

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<sup>8</sup> ... τῆς ἀπλουστερίας τῶν ῥημάτων ἐξηγήσεως ὁ λόγος ἦν, ὥστε πρόσφορον τῇ ἀπλότητι τῶν ἀκουόντων παραθέσθαι τὸν λόγον, μετὰ τοῦ καὶ τοῖς τῶν μειζόνων ἀκροαταῖς συναναβαίνειν πως αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐξήγησιν, τὰ ποικίλα μαθήματα τῆς ἔξω φιλοσοφίας παραδεικνύουσιν ὥστε παρὰ μὲν τῶν πολλῶν νοεῖσθαι, παρὰ δὲ τῶν ὑπερεχόντων θαυμάζεσθαι. *Apol. in Hex.* ed. G.H. Forbes (Burnt-island 1855) c. 4, p. 8 = PG 44,65B.

## 'IDEA' AND 'MATTER' IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS OF THE FIRST WORDS OF GENESIS

### A Chapter in the Encounter between Greek Philosophy and Christian Thought

#### *Footnotes to Plato'*

In a book published in 1929 the English philosopher Whitehead made a pronouncement on European philosophy that has become famous. He claimed that this philosophy can best be characterized as a series of 'footnotes to Plato'.<sup>1</sup> Such generalizing pronouncements may give rise to serious objections. In this case one might wonder whether justice is done to more than twenty centuries of intellectual effort when it is described as (mere) footnotes. In my view, however, Whitehead's pronouncement contains a deep truth. It is a fact that, up to the time of the existentialist movement, Plato's thought has determined the course of European philosophy.

When we speak of 'Plato's thought', we mean first and foremost 'the theory of ideas'. This doctrine states that our world of change and limitation does not constitute true reality. That reality is to be located in the 'ideas', the eternal unchanging forms.<sup>2</sup> This true reality is knowable for us human beings, because there is something in us that is related to that reality, namely our soul, which 'in itself'<sup>3</sup> has the same characteristics as the ideas. The ideas are exemplified in the material things of the realm; our soul is located

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<sup>1</sup> *Process and Reality*, Cambridge, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to remember that the word ἰδέα in Plato does not mean 'idea' in the sense of a concept. In his *Lexique de Platon* E. des Places states: "Pas plus que pour εἶδος le sens de 'concept' n'existe pour ἰδέα" (p. 260).

<sup>3</sup> In his dialogue the *Phaedo*, which bears the subtitle περὶ ψυχῆς, Plato is greatly taken with the "discovery" of the ideas and their recognition by the soul. He also talks about the soul "on its own", by which he means the soul in its pure state. In the *Phaedrus* he later distinguishes between different parts of the soul: λογιστικόν, θυμοειδές, ἐπιθυμητικόν. The soul "on its own" in the *Phaedo* corresponds to the *logistikon* in the *Phaedrus*. At a later stage the highest part of the soul will also be referred to as the νοῦς (intellect). In the (Ps)-Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I* (130c3) we find the formula that was to exert great influence on Platonic philosophy: "man is none other than his soul" (cf. J. Pépin, *Idees grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu*, Paris 1971, 71).

in the body. Just as the ideas exist at a higher level of reality than what is derived from them, so the soul is more than the body.

By means of this doctrine Plato created a view of reality and of man which dominated western philosophy for more than twenty centuries. Of course, it is a fact that Aristotle, his most celebrated pupil, did away with the ideas. He regarded this 'super-structure' as unnecessary for the explanation of reality. But this disagreement did not prevent him from approaching reality in terms of intelligible forms that are present in the things themselves as objects of knowledge. He did away with a separate world of ideas, but retained forms as universal objects of thought. He remained 'Platonic' to the extent that he continued to take the essence as starting point, even if he did not locate it in a separate higher reality. This basically Platonic approach was maintained right up to the time that the question of 'existence' became a central object of philosophical discussion.

One of the reasons that Plato's philosophy retained its dominance in western philosophy has to do with the subject of this paper, namely the encounter between Christianity and Greek philosophy. In that encounter the philosophy inspired by Plato played a central role. I wish to illustrate how this took place by examining the interpretations given by early Christian thinkers to the first words of the first book of the Bible, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'.

### *Praenotanda*

But before I commence my discussion of this exegesis, it is first necessary to make a number of general remarks.

It might be thought remarkable that the Bible and philosophy are brought into contact with each other in this way. Are these not separate magnitudes that can hardly fit in the same frame of reference? This may be how we regard the matter today, but during the period when the texts under discussion were written it was viewed quite differently. When early Christian thinkers were engaged in the study of the Bible, both they and their opponents were convinced that they were engaged in philosophy. Philosophy is the quest for wisdom. This wisdom, according to the philosophical views of the time, could be sought along differing paths. In addition to the path that was usually regarded as typically Greek, i.e.

via the method of rational proof, there was also the path that sought it in the books of ancient peoples. In the second century A.D. Galen was a representative of the first path, Numenius of Apamea of the second.<sup>4</sup> If, then, the ancient wisdom was a source of philosophy, why could not the ancient books of the Jews make a claim to this title? Accordingly, when the early Christian thinkers began to occupy themselves with the sacred books of the Jews, they regarded this as entirely consistent with their interest in Greek philosophy.

In saying this, I have already indicated that the writers with which we shall be concerned were people who had received what we would now call an academic education. They were trained in Greek philosophy (and also rhetoric). This means that they had become acquainted with the major issues raised in that philosophical tradition. It is no exaggeration to say that Greek philosophy from Thales to Plotinus had been dominated by the question of the *archè*, the principle (or principles) out of which all things come into being. In the case of Thales this was a material principle, water; for Plotinus it was that which is elevated beyond being and thought, the One (a title which seems to say nothing about the nature of this highest principle, but at heart indicates that a single ultimate principle was being sought). How, would a person who had been trained in this philosophical tradition react when he opened the Bible and read the book Genesis, the book of 'coming into being' and read, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'?

### *The example of Philo*

We have now almost reached the point that we can focus our attention on those early Christian authors. But before we do so, we must not fail to observe that these thinkers were not the first who wished to expound their holy books with the help of categories of thought drawn from Greek philosophy. They were preceded by a Jewish thinker, Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus, who, in that bastion of Hellenism where he lived, undertook to expound

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<sup>4</sup> See J.C.M. van Winden, "Le Christianisme et la philosophie. Le commencement du dialogue entre la foi et la raison", in *Kyriakon*. Festschrift J. Quasten, I 205–213 (see p. 243–56 in this volume). A German translation can be found in Cl. Zintzen (ed.), *Der Mittelplatonismus* (Wege der Forschung, 70), Darmstadt 1981, 397–412.

the sacred books, and especially the book Genesis, with the help of Greek philosophy for the benefit of his Alexandrian co-religionists.

I would like to give a small sample of Philo's explanation of the creation account of Moses. This will immediately set us on the path later traversed by the early Christian authors whom we shall be discussing.

When it is stated in the Genesis account that God created the cosmos in six days, we should not conclude that God needed time to create everything. God created all things simultaneously. That the Bible does speak about a period of six days has to do with the nature of what is created. The account concerns a world of becoming (*genesis*). Becoming requires order. Order is intrinsically related to number. Now the number that belongs to becoming *par excellence* is the number six, for it is the product (*genesis*) of the first two numbers, two and three, the first even and the first odd number, representing the female and male element in the world. Six, therefore, is the first perfect number.<sup>5</sup> — The Pythagorean background of these remarks rings through loud and clear. — In this way every day was assigned part of visible created cosmos, with the exception of day one. What is recounted as being created on that day does not form part of the visible creation, but has to do with another reality, of the intelligible world, which preceded the creation of the material world. Just as an architect who has the task to build a city first makes a design in his mind, so the maker of this universe first formed a *kosmos noëtos*, a world in the mind, which was to serve as a model for the material world. This world of ideas was in God's *logos* — I leave this term as yet untranslated —, indeed, one may say that this ideal world *was* the *logos* of God when engaged in his creative activity.<sup>6</sup>

What has motivated Philo to read this world of ideas into Genesis? The first answer is that he was apparently inclined to look for such a concept in the text. This inclination was the result of his study of Greek philosophy, in which that Platonic concept

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<sup>5</sup> *De opificio mundi* 13. The unit is not a number, for number entails multiplicity. See Euclid, *Elementa* VII 1: μονάς ἐστὶ καθ' ἣν ἕκαστον ἐν λέγεται. ἀριθμὸς δὲ τὸ μονάδων συγκείμενον πλῆθος.

<sup>6</sup> *De opificio mundi* 24: ...οὐδὲν ἄν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἢ θεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιούντος. On this text and the following passage see further J.C.M. van Winden, "The World of Ideas in Philo of Alexandria. An Interpretation of *De opificio mundi* 24–25", *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983) 209–217 (see p. 219–28 in this volume).

played an important role, and especially in a specific application, as we shall see directly. Given this inclination, however, he was able to point to the fact that the creation account contains two sets of doublets: the creation of the heaven and the earth is mentioned twice, and so is the creation of man. That fact was an excellent basis for the view that there are two stages in the creation process, first the creation of an intelligible (noetic) reality and then the creation of the material world. Philo found a confirmation of this interpretation in another noteworthy detail of the text: Moses speaks in his account not of the 'first day' but of 'day one'. This is in fact no more than a hebraism, but Philo perceived in it an indication of unity (the *μόνας*), i.e. of that unity which is the chief characteristic of ideal reality.<sup>7</sup>

First we need to return to Plato. At the beginning of my paper I spoke about Plato's theory of ideas, but did not indicate how they were presented in his later dialogue, the *Timaeus*. In this work Plato brings onto the stage a creator figure, the demiurge, who looks at a perfect model and then brings the cosmos into existence.<sup>8</sup> It is worth spending quite some time examining this dialogue, which is often called Plato's creation account. In the present context, however, I will have to confine myself to saying that this presentation of a Father and Maker, who created the world after contemplating the eternal, unchanging reality of the ideas, has given rise to an enormous discussion. There have been commentators who claimed that one should not read more into it than a metaphorical expression of the creative effect of the eternal divine ideas. Plato did not at all intend us to think that this Father and Maker really existed. He merely used him as a symbol. Others, however, have been in favour of a more literal interpretation. They saw in the Demiurge a divine entity. And when in the centuries that followed after Plato's death people began to speak more and more of a single divine entity, i.e. of 'God' (*ὁ θεός*), the question had to be raised sooner or later where these ideas are to be located. Since they too were regarded as divine, it was a predictable move to merge God and the ideas together and to regard the ideas as exist-

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<sup>7</sup> *De opif. mundi* 15: "To each of the days he assigned some of the parts of the all, except for the first, which he himself did not even call the first, in order to prevent it being numbered with the others; he gave it the very suitable name "one", because he saw in it the essence of unity and therefore gave it this appropriate name."

<sup>8</sup> *Tim.* 29a2ff.

ing in God, and so make them into God's thoughts.<sup>9</sup> According to some scholars the development already took place soon after Plato's death.<sup>10</sup> However this may be, it is apparent that Philo stands in this tradition. It was highly attractive for him to see a similarity between the Father and Maker of Plato's *Timaeus* and the one God who created the heaven and the earth.

We saw, therefore, that Philo first has God create a plan in his mind, a world of ideas,<sup>11</sup> which he allows to coincide with God's *logos*. This term *logos* also briefly requires our attention. In Greek philosophy it is not used in relation to the world of ideas. In other areas of this philosophy it does gain a dominant place, especially in Stoicism, where it represents the principle of order, harmony and regularity. One could even go further and state that there is no better term than *logos* to express a fundamental theme in Greek philosophy, namely that all things in this world possess a certain proportion and order, which allows them to be comprehended by the mind. This is one aspect of the term. But Philo also had another source for the term. In Jewish thought *logos* represents the *logos* of God, the 'word' of God that caused all things to be created. The Genesis text repeats over and over again, 'God *spoke*, and it was so'. There can be no doubt that Philo was acquainted with Jewish reflections on that word of God, in which it virtually gains an independent existence. This Word of God appears in the Jewish wisdom literature as Wisdom, which was with God when he created the world (Prov. 8:30).

These brief remarks are sufficient to give an indication of how the concept of the *logos* in Philo allows Greek and Jewish thought

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<sup>9</sup> Thus the *ιδέαι* of Plato changed from "forms" to "ideas". Because we are now used to speaking of the "ideas" of Plato, the transition is less obvious.

<sup>10</sup> It is sometimes suggested that Plato himself already viewed ideas as the thoughts of God. De Rijk rightly points out that this suggestion is incorrect because in Plato the notion of "god" is still pluriform. (L.M. de Rijk, "*Quaestio de Ideis*. Some notes on an important chapter of Platonism", in *Kephalaion*, Festschrift C.J. de Vogel, ed. J. Mansfeld and L.M. de Rijk, Assen 1975, 204ff.) Compare also A.N.M. Rich, "The Platonic Ideas as the Thoughts of God", *Mnemosyne* IV 7 (1954) 123-133. German translation in *Der Mittelplatonismus* (see note 4) 200-211.

<sup>11</sup> Our term 'world of ideas' translates the Greek words *κόσμος νοητός*. This is not an expression that Plato himself uses, for he speaks of the higher reality as of a *ζῶον (παντελές)*, a (perfect or complete) living being (*Tim.* 31b2). Philo did not want to use this terminology because he saw neither this world nor that higher world as a living being. Cf. H.A. Wolfson, *Religious Philosophy*, New York 1965, 32.

to converge. The direct implication is that translation of the term in the Philonic context is rather problematic. From the viewpoint of Greek thought the world of ideas represents the 'plan' or 'model' used for the creation of the cosmos; God's *logos* thus represents God's plan. From the viewpoint of Jewish thought, however, it is God's word. In the Loeb translation Whitaker opts for the latter translation. The French translator Arnaldez leaves the term untranslated, as I too did above.

The question how Philo conceived the relation between God and His *logos* is very difficult. From what we have said it is clear that the *logos* must be viewed in relation to God's creative activity. But is he himself a creature? One would be inclined to answer in the affirmative because the world of ideas which seemed to coincide with the *logos* was created. But no clear answer is given on this point. Wolfson solves it by assuming two stages in the *logos*, one within God and one outside God.<sup>12</sup> This recalls Augustine who assumes the existence of an uncreated and a created Wisdom. We shall have to set this problem aside. But it is important to note that Philo also calls the *logos* of God 'the image (εἰκὼν) of God'.<sup>13</sup> He is the image of God, according to which man is created. This expression at the very least suggests that we have to do with a separate entity, a hypostasis.<sup>14</sup> Let this suffice for Philo as predecessor of the Fathers.

### *The New Testament*

Before we turn to the early Christian exegesis of the creation account, there is still one more text on 'the *logos*' which I must not pass by. You will no doubt have thought of it already yourselves. I

<sup>12</sup> *Religious Philosophy*, 38.

<sup>13</sup> *De opif. mundi* 25. Thus man is εἰκὼν εἰκόνοϋ, "image of an image". See the article cited in n.6. One finds a similar idea in Origenes, *In Joh.* I 104.

<sup>14</sup> Ἡ δὲ γῆ ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος. Sometimes three other well-known translations, those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, were also taken into consideration. See for instance Gregorius of Nyssa's *Apologia* c.17 Forbes, PG 44, 80AB and Calcidius' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, 278, p. 282-3 Waszink. For the very striking translation of this passage given by Calcidius, see J.C.M. van Winden, "Terra autem stupida quadam erat admiratione". Reflexions on a remarkable translation of Genesis 1:2a, in R. van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren (edd.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religion*. Festschrift for Gilles Quispel, Leiden 1981, 458-464 (see p. 107-15 in this volume).

mean the beginning of the Gospel of John: 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' For the background of the term *logos* I can refer to what was just said about Philo's usage. In this text, however, it is absolutely clear that the meaning 'Word', i.e. the Jewish source, is dominant, and also that here we have to do with the *Logos* as a separate entity. The text refers to the Word that became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

Elsewhere in the New Testament as well, terminology is used for Christ which remind us of Philo. In the hymn to Christ in Paul's letter to the inhabitants of Colosse we read: 'He is the image (εἰκών) of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For in him all things were created, visible and invisible' (Col. 1:15–16).

These brief comments on the New Testament provide us with the final building-block that we need for the interpretation of the creation account in the early Christian thinkers.

### *'In the beginning'*

'In the beginning God made heaven and earth, and the earth was invisible and unstructured.' These are the opening words of Genesis in an English translation based on the Greek Septuagint. This was the translation that was used by early Christian authors.<sup>15</sup> How then did these words sound in the ears of thinkers who had been trained in Greek philosophy?

As I have already emphasized, it was the question of the *archè* of reality that dominated this philosophy. What do we read here? If we translate the opening words ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός ... with 'In the beginning God made ...', this is not incorrect, yet we are missing a nuance. The thinkers we are speaking about would have noted that the word ἀρχῇ has no article, so that it is possible to translate 'in a beginning God made ...' or 'there is a beginning in which God made ...'. What this amounts to is that the words ἐν ἀρχῇ no longer have to be a temporal indication, but can also have other meanings. The question thus becomes: what is that 'beginning' in which God made heaven and earth?

<sup>15</sup> See J.C.M. van Winden, "In the Beginning. Some observations on the Patristic Interpretations of Genesis 1:1", *Vigiliae Christianae* 17 (1963) 105–121 (see p. 61–77 in this volume). See also the first article in this volume: 'Frühchristliche Bibelexegese. Der Anfang'.

In order to illustrate what this manner of reading the text can lead to, I will give you an example. In his first sermon on the Creation account Basil the Great located in this term ἀρχή the four Aristotelian principles: formal cause, material cause, efficient cause, final cause. God gave heaven and earth a beginning, i.e. a first movement, a purpose, a first principle of order (a formative *logos*) and a first foundation (upon which all things are founded). Even if we must conclude that Basil somewhat distorts the Aristotelian doctrine, his intention is clear. The Bible is read as a philosophical work. This becomes even more apparent when Basil starts to look for the different meanings of ἀρχή elsewhere in the biblical text.

But Basil's account is not the first explanation of the *archè* in Genesis 1:1 to be found in early Christian literature. In the case of Origen, the great systematic thinker from Alexandria (185–255), the 'beginning' in which God created heaven and earth is identified with 'our Lord and universal Saviour Christ Jesus, "first born of all creation" (Col. 1:15). In this beginning, therefore, that is his Word, God created heaven and earth, just as the Evangelist John says at the outset of his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word ...". It is thus not the case that Moses indicates here some kind of temporal beginning, but he says that in the beginning, i.e. in the Saviour, heaven and earth ... are made.' This is what we read in a fragment of his Commentary on the book Genesis.<sup>16</sup>

After what I have said so far, this interpretation can hardly be considered surprising. It is clearly a development of the interpretation in terms of the *logos* that we found in Philo. But the link to Greek philosophy is not so clear. What has happened to the ideas? For an answer to this question we need to turn to Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John, and especially his explanation of the term *archè* that we find there. Having first determined that in the Bible, just as in Greek philosophy, this term has many meanings, he examined the various interpretative possibilities one by

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<sup>16</sup> Migne, P.G. 12, 145 C (the Latin translation of Rufinus): "*In principio creavit deus caelum et terram*". Quid (Migne: *Quod*) est omnium principium nisi dominus noster et salvator omnium Christus Jesus, "*primogenitus omnis creaturae*" (Col. 1, 15)? *In hoc ergo principio, hoc est in verbo suo, deus caelum et terram fecit, sicut et evangelista Joannes in initio evangelii sui ait dicens: "In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum ..."* (John 1, 1–3). *Non ergo hic temporale aliquod principium dicit; sed in principio id est in Salvatore factum esse dicit caelum et terram et omnia quae facta sunt.*

one. One of these is that ἀρχή here refers to the Wisdom of God, and that in that Wisdom the models (or types) of things are located, i.e. the ideas.<sup>17</sup> Origen continues, for just as a house or a ship is built in accordance with the ideas in the mind of the builder, so the whole of creation is brought into being according to the patterns which are formed by God in his Wisdom.<sup>18</sup>

It is apparent that we see here the continuing presence of Plato's ideas, but now as the thoughts of God. Origen's words, above all in his explanatory comments (the comparison with the architect), clearly recall Philo. What differs in his version is that he relates the ideas to the Wisdom of God, citing the text from the Psalms (103:24), 'You created all things *in wisdom*,' that is to say, God created all things in his Wisdom, i.e. his Logos, after which he made the universe using what was created in the Logos as model. And that Logos is the Son of God.

In reading these reflections on the part of Origen one might still wish to raise the question: what status do those ideas possess, are they created or uncreated? That this remains problematic should hardly give rise to surprise when we consider that the status of the Logos as God's son also gives rise to many unanswered questions. Not until the Arian controversy did it prove possible to attain clarity on these subjects.

A fully developed doctrine is found two centuries later in the works of Augustine. In his Confessions he writes: 'You, Lord, ... *in the beginning* (or *principle*) that is out of yourself, in your Wisdom that is born out of your substance, you made something, and you did that out of nothing' (12.7). The formulation 'born out of your substance' is the one that also applies to the Son, 'born, not made'. (We shall see that Augustine additionally postulates a created wisdom as well.) A little further in the same work he gives four differing interpretations of Genesis 1:1 which have the common feature

<sup>17</sup> This is an abbreviated version of the description given by Origen in *In Joh.* I 113. There he says that the words ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος can be understood to mean ἐν σοφίᾳ ἦν ὁ λόγος, which can then be equated with "the logos is wisdom". This wisdom is then described as τοὺς τύπους τοῦ συστήματος τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ νοημάτων (the models which are found in the composite of thoughts present in Him (= ideas)). *In Joh.* I 111 has a similar formula.

The fact that one can read ἀρχὴ ἦν ὁ λόγος instead of ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος is well demonstrated by Acacius of Caesarea (†366), in a fragment that can be found in R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois*, Rome 1959, 106.

<sup>18</sup> *In Joh.* I 114.

that *In principio* is explained as *in verbo suo sibi coaeterno*; what was called Wisdom above is here described as 'the Word of God which is coeternal with God'. Augustine devotes almost the entire 11th book of the Confessions to this opening phrase *In principio*. Moreover in a special discussion of the doctrine of the ideas he states that these are 'eternal immutable models in the divine mind (*in mente divina*)'.<sup>19</sup> It is apparent that the Platonic ideas have become a divine reality in the theological sense, coinciding with the wisdom that has been born in God from all eternity, the eternal Word.

*'The earth'*

I have now reached the interpretation of 'heaven and earth'. There is an obvious explanation of these words, namely that they refer to the totality of the visible universe. Predictably this interpretation is found in early Christian writers. But here too exegetical reflection goes further. In the first place this applies to the term 'earth'. The mention of the 'earth' is continued in the second verse of the Septuagint translation: 'the earth was invisible (ἀόρατος) and unstructured (ἀκατασκεύαστος)'. When these words were read by a mind trained in Greek philosophy, it was almost impossible not to make an association with the description given by Aristotle of the material principle, the ὕλη (matter), namely that it is ἄμορφος, ἀνείδεος, 'without shape, without form'.

Aristotle was greatly preoccupied with the question concerning the principles of material reality. On the basis of an analysis of change—the chief characteristic of the material realm—he concluded that 'something' always subsists in the change from not-a to a. As such this 'something' is neither the one thing nor the other: water changes from being not-warm to being warm. This is a rather superficial form of change. Others are more fundamental. But in each case one can discern the same structure. Ultimately one arrives at a 'something' that itself possesses no form whatsoever: this has been given the name πρώτη ὕλη, *materia prima*.<sup>20</sup> Apart from the pair of terms form-matter, Aristotle also speaks of act and

<sup>19</sup> *Quaestio* 46: *De ideis*, PL 40, 29–31.

<sup>20</sup> This is not yet a technical term in Aristotle. In his work the first ὕλη or τὸ πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον can be the first material that one finds when analysing change e.g. water that changes from hot to cold. (In a recent Leiden thesis R. Bemelmans denies that the concept of prime matter is Aristotelian: *Materia prima in Aristoteles: een hardnekkig misverstand*, diss. Leiden 1995.)

potency, reality and possibility. What we just called 'prime matter' is then called 'pure potentiality'.

It is extremely difficult to speak about this 'matter' in the correct manner. There is the constant danger that one makes these principles into independent realities, e.g. that that prime matter becomes something like 'the stuff that you can make anything you like out of'. This is of course quite incorrect. But how does one speak of 'something' about which nothing can be pronounced, neither that it is nor that it is not? Matter-and-form may be regarded as a conceptual scheme that one uses to understand reality, but the elements of that scheme can never be concretely indicated in reality itself.

This matter, which can only be negatively conceived, is located by the first Christian author to give an interpretation of Genesis, Theophilus of Antioch ( $\pm$  180), in Genesis 1:2a: 'the earth was invisible and unstructured'. He writes: 'This is what divine scripture teaches us in the first place, that there is a created matter which came into being through God's agency, from which he made and fashioned the cosmos'.<sup>21</sup> (The expression 'from which' already points us in the direction of a conception of matter as a fine material.)

In this quotation the reader will doubtless hear how much emphasis is placed on the createdness of this matter: 'created matter which came into being through God's agency'. This is done on purpose, because the words of Genesis can easily be read differently as follows: 'God made heaven and earth; this earth was (before God fashioned it) invisible and unstructured', i.e. the earth was already present before God did anything with it. This interpretation implies that matter is an independent principle, a principle beside God. At the end of the 2nd century this view all of a sudden was vigorously rejected. Until then the view that God made use of an already existent matter in order to create the world was not regarded as problematic. The expression that God created 'out of nothing (or non-being)' was used, but it was not taken to exclude an uncreated matter. Creation out of nothing simply meant that the world did not previously exist.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Ad Autolycum* II 10 *ad fin.*

<sup>22</sup> See G. May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der creatio ex nihilo*. Berlin-New York 1978. In an article in *JJS* 35 (1984) 127-135, entitled "The origins of the Doctrine of Creatio Ex Nihilo", J.A. Goldstein

As soon as the problem whether matter could exist as a second independent principle next to God was raised, this view became extremely contentious and was subjected to strong attack. Extensive discussions can be found in Tertullian's *Adversus Hermogenem*<sup>23</sup> and the *Exameron* of Ambrose.<sup>24</sup> But it was of course not necessary to read that second verse 'the earth was...' so that it described a situation that existed before the creation. It was also possible to interpret that the earth that God created was 'invisible and unstructured'. And if this earth was interpreted in terms of matter, then this meant that God also created that matter.

It seems, however, that there were authors who thought that the assumption of matter in itself gave rise to the threat of an unacceptable dualism. In their view material reality was nothing else than a composite of qualities. If, they argued, one was to remove every kind of quality—hardness, softness, heat, cold, wetness, dryness, etc.—from a thing, then nothing whatsoever would remain. In their struggle against the defenders of an uncreated matter they reasoned as follows: we are all in agreement that that God created the qualities (i.e. form). If the sum of the qualities form the whole of material reality, then there is absolutely no reason why one should want to assume the existence of an uncreated matter. This view is first formulated, as far we know, by Origen in his great theological treatise *On the principles*.<sup>25</sup> It is also found in Basil<sup>26</sup> and Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>27</sup> The last-named author posits this theory together with the question how an immaterial (ἄυλος) divinity can

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defends the thesis that the *creatio ex nihilo* is a polemical doctrine designed to defend belief in the physical resurrection. In my opinion, the author does not succeed in proving the connection.

<sup>23</sup> See the translation and commentary by J.H. Waszink, *Tertullian, The Treatise against Hermogenes* (Ancient Christian Writers 24), Westminster (Maryland)-London 1956.

<sup>24</sup> See J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie chrétienne*, Paris 1964.

<sup>25</sup> *De principiis* IV 4, 7 (34), from which the present description is taken. The text of Rufinus' translation is as follows: *Quidam ergo altius de his volentes inquirere ausi sunt dicere nihil aliud esse naturam corpoream quam qualitates. Si enim duritia et mollities, calidum et frigidum, humidum et aridum qualitas est, his autem vel ceteris huius modi amputatis nihil aliud intellegitur subiacere, videbuntur qualitates esse omnia. Unde et hi, qui haec adserunt, adseverare conati sunt, ut quoniam omnes, qui materiam infectam dicunt, qualitates a deo factas esse confitentur, inveniatur per hoc etiam secundum ipsos nec materia esse infecta, si quidem qualitates sint omnia, quae utique sine contradictione ab omnibus a deo facta esse pronuntiantur.*

<sup>26</sup> In *Hexameron* I 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Apologia in Hexameron*, PG 44, 69 A–C (ed. Forbes 1855, chap 7, *ad fin.*); *De hom. opif.* 24, PG 44, 212D–213B, *De anima et resurrectione*, PG 46, 124 C–D.

be the cause of a material reality. If one puts forward the hypothesis that material reality is a συνδρομή τῶν ποιότητων, a 'convergence of qualities', and combines it with the view that qualities as such are not material but objects of thought (ἐννοιαὶ ψιλαὶ καὶ νοήματα), then the antithesis between God and matter can be entirely eliminated.

A number of scholars have drawn attention to this remarkable theory. Most thorough in her treatment has been Monique Alexandre, who speaks of a 'thèse philosophique extrême' utilized by these authors, but gives no indication of where it should be situated.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the following solution of the problem might be suggested. As we have said, Aristotle finds the explanation for materiality in his concept of matter. But it emerged that this matter when thoroughly examined virtually vanishes into nothing. This causes Augustine to describe it as a *prope nihil*.<sup>29</sup> Porphyry even states that matter is 'true non-being' and 'privation of all being'.<sup>30</sup> It is apparent that the further one goes in allowing matter to approach non-being, the less attractive it becomes as a solution for the materiality of sense-perceptible reality. It seems plausible to assume that certain authors dropped the notion of an independent matter as the explanation for materiality and turned instead to the notion of form. Their reasoning might have been as follows: it is true that form as component of material reality must itself be immaterial, but it cannot possess the absolute purity of the noetic idea, of which it is the derived image. Could not this element of 'derivation' be invoked as explanation for the materiality of reality? The assumption would be that it is not matter that receives the derived forms (i.e. qualities) and gives them the appearance of material reality, but rather empty space. One could make a comparison with Plato's doctrine in the *Timaeus*, in which he posits mathematical figures reflected in space as the explanation for sense-perceptibility of the

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<sup>28</sup> M. Alexandre, "L'exégèse de Gen. 1, 1-2a dans l'*In Hexaemeron* de Grégoire de Nysse: deux approches du problème de la matière", in *Gregor von Nyssa und die Philosophie*, herausg. von H. Dörrie, M. Altenburger, U. Schramm, Leiden, 1976, 168. (In his study *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London 1983, 290-4, R. Sorabji argues that Gregory here anticipates a form of idealism (in the modern sense).)

<sup>29</sup> *Conf.* XII 7 (end); XII 8 (middle). See also XII 6 (end): *Si dici potest 'nihil aliquid' et 'est non est'.*

<sup>30</sup> ἀληθινὸν μὴ ὄν and ἔλλειψις παντὸς τοῦ ὄντος in 'Αφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά, 22; cf. J.H. Waszink, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, London-Leiden 1962, p. CIII.

phenomenal world.<sup>31</sup> These mathematical figures are themselves not material, but do have the task of furnishing an explanation for that materiality.

*'The heaven'*

We now turn to the other word in the opening verse, 'the heaven'. How was this term understood? We shall see that a development occurred in its interpretation which ultimately led to Augustine's view that it represented the created spiritual reality, in which he made the further distinction between an unformed and a formed stage. In the first centuries, however, heaven and earth were mostly understood as indicating the totality of sense-perceptible reality. If, then, it was said of the earth that it was unformed, then that was taken to refer to the totality of this material reality, including the (visible) heaven.

It was Basil's view that 'heaven and earth' signified our world in its totality. (His inclination was to interpret the biblical text as literally as he could. As we saw,<sup>32</sup> he rejected the notion of matter.)

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<sup>31</sup> The explanation for the elimination of matter given here was suggested to me by my colleague, L. M. de Rijk; I am thankful for his assistance. It might be added that in these texts the μέθεξις, which represents a weakening in respect of the ideas, is not mentioned.

This explanation, in which a physical principle as receiver or carrier of the qualities is missing, is similar to the explanation that G. Prauss attributes to Plato in the early stages of the theory of ideas, in *Platon und der logische Eleatismus*, Berlin 1966. At that stage Plato did not think in terms of a distinction between substance/attribute; so, when dealing with a sense-perceptible object, it is not the case that one has to do with something that has certain qualities, certain characteristics. Prauss avoids these last two terms and speaks of *dynameis*. Material things are thus a composite or mixture of *dynameis*. He says: "So lange er (Plato) ... die Dinge als Aggregate oder Mischungen stofflicher Dynameis denkt, besteht für ihn gar kein Grund zur Erklärung der Dinge ein allgemeines Stoffprinzip anzunehmen". This interpretation of things as an "Aggregate" of *dynameis* is indeed similar to Gregory's interpretation of a "composite of qualities". There is, however, an essential difference in interpretation. Prauss states that the *dynameis* are *material*, while the Christian authors we mentioned believe this is not the case. It is possible, however, that Prauss has not been precise in his formulation and actually means the *dynameis* that are present in the material realm (i.e. immanent as opposed to the transcendent). In that case the similarity with the interpretation discussed here is much greater. The thesis presented by Prauss, also with regard to Plato's later development, has been worked out in more detail by L.M. de Rijk in his *Plato's Sophist: a Philosophical Commentary* (Verhand. Kon. Ned. Akad. v. Wet. Afd. Lett. N.S. vol. 133), Amsterdam-Oxford-New York 1986.

<sup>32</sup> See n. 23.

But he does observe the following: it should not be thought when we read 'in the beginning God created heaven and earth' that this 'heaven and earth' was the first thing that God made. On the contrary, a prior act of creation had already taken place, a supra-temporal creation which can only be conceived by the mind and was not spoken of by Moses because his readers would not be able to understand it. This spiritual world contains according to Basil (1) 'a spiritual light that is fitting for the felicity of those who love the Lord,' and (2) the rational invisible natures and the whole intelligible creation'.<sup>33</sup> Basil thus accepts the existence of a noetic, that is to say spiritual reality, which is clearly ontologically superior to the reality in which mankind lives. It is a created reality and is described as 'noetic', the characteristic of the Platonic ideas. But, as we already noted, Basil does not locate this reality in Genesis 1:1.

Gregory of Nyssa gives another fascinating explanation of 'heaven and earth'. He too is of the opinion that Moses indicates

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<sup>33</sup> *In Hex.* I 5 δημιουργήματα δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ ὁ τῶν ὅλων κτίστης καὶ δημιουργὸς ἀπετέλεσε, φῶς νοητὸν πρέπον τῇ μακαριότητι τῶν φιλοῦντων τὸν Κύριον, τὰς λογικὰς καὶ ἀοράτους φύσεις, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν τῶν νοητῶν διακόσμησιν ... The same idea can already be found in Philo, *De opif. mundi* 143, where he says that before mankind the universe already had citizens whom one could call citizens of the Great World-city (μεγαλοπολῖται as opposed to man who is called κοσμοπολίτης); they have been given the outer sphere of heaven as their place of habitation and are registered in the largest and most perfect state. Who else could they be than rational, divine beings, partly incorporeal and noetic, partly corporeal like the stars? (ταύτης τῆς πόλεως καὶ πολιτείας ἔδει τινὰς εἶναι πρὸ ἀνθρώπου πολίτας, οἱ λέγοντ' ἂν ἐνδίκως μεγαλοπολῖται τὸν μέγιστον περίβολον οἰκεῖν λαχόντες καὶ τῷ μεγίστῳ καὶ τελειοτάτῳ πολιτεύματι ἐγγραφέντες, οὗτοι δὲ τίνες ἂν εἶεν ὅτι μὴ λογικαὶ καὶ θεῖαι φύσεις, αἱ μὲν ἀσώματοι καὶ νοηταί, αἱ δὲ οὐκ ἄνευ σωμάτων, ὁποίους συμβέβηκεν εἶναι τοὺς ἀστέρας). Here a relationship is also suggested between these "divine beings" and the stars. We recall that Plato, *Epinomis* 984D, spoke of the heavenly bodies as "the visible gods", while Aristotle saw the heavenly spheres as being composed of the *quinta essentia*, *a quo essent astra mentesque* (according to Cicero *Acad.* I 7, 26). See L. Alfonsi, "Traces du jeune Aristote dans la "Cohortatio ad Gentiles" faussement attribuée à Justin", *Vig. Chr.* 2 (1948) 65–88, especially 82ff. Philo sees the stars as living spiritual beings that are completely virtuous, as opposed to man whose virtue is as yet mixed with wickedness, each star being a *nous* (*De opif. mundi*, 73; τὰ δ' αὖ μόνως κεκοινώνηκεν ἀρετῆς ἀμέτοχα πάσης ὄντα κακίας, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀστέρες· οὗτοι γὰρ ζῶα τε εἶναι λέγονται καὶ ζῶα νοερά, μᾶλλον δὲ νοὺς αὐτὸς ἕκαστος, ὅλος δι' ὅλων σπουδαῖος καὶ παντὸς ἀνεπίδεκτος κακοῦ· τὰ δὲ τῆς μικτῆς ἐστὶ φύσεως, ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος ...) Origen too will speak of the stars as living rational beings (*De princ.* I 7, 3: *Quodsi animantes sunt stellae et rationabiles animantes* ...). The underlying principle of these texts is the Platonic idea that it is unthinkable that the lower, earthly sphere should contain living beings while the higher should not.

with these words the totality of the material world, but only in germ. 'Heaven and earth' are the seminal powers which God in the beginning placed in the creation.<sup>34</sup> The creation account in Genesis reveals how these seminal forces develop. This is the meaning of God's creative word in Genesis: the development of the seeds of wisdom which were placed by God in his creation at the beginning. It is fascinating to read how Gregory manages to read this 'evolutionary process' in the words of the text. He regards the opening chapter of Genesis as a treatise of 'physical doctrine in the form of a narrative,' as he himself describes it.<sup>35</sup> His intention is to demonstrate that the creation account depicts a totally harmonious sequence of development.<sup>36</sup>

In Gregory's case too this material reality is not the only one that exists. Beyond the limits of the visible creation a spiritual world is found, a νοητὴ κτίσις,<sup>37</sup> which in his view is indicated in the Genesis account by means of the 'waters above the heaven'

<sup>34</sup> In *Apologia in Hexaemeron* Gregory uses the terms ἀφορμαί, αἰτίαι, δυνάμεις (PG 72B; Forbes c. 9); and also σπερματική τις δύναμις (PG 77D; Forbes c. 16).

<sup>35</sup> *Apol.* c. 9 Forbes, PG 72C: ἐν διηγήσεως εἶδει περὶ τῶν φυσικῶν δογμάτων φιλοσοφήσας.

<sup>36</sup> Gregory here responds to the criticism of the literal interpretation given by his brother, Basil. The question was raised, for instance, how there could be day and night before the creation of the sun and moon on the fourth day. Gregory's explanation can be briefly indicated by stating what his answer was to the above mentioned problem. That God created heaven and earth means: God created the universe, but in that universe only the seed of things was present. Gregory sees the universe as a mixture of elements that can be found in space like in a big ball. It is therefore an idea of chaos.

When it is written: "God said: let there be light and there was light", then this is an indication of a process that will take place in the universe. Light springs forth out of the jumble of elements—for that is its nature—and speeds through space, until it reaches the edge of the material world (beyond this is the 'location' of the noetic world); this must mean that light moves in a circle around the edge of the material world. (He apparently regards light as one large entity that moves in a circular path). As a result of this circular movement of light, there appears on the compacted mass of the other elements, which had been left behind in the middle, light and darkness alternately (just as happens now on earth), i.e. before the creation of the sun and the moon.

What then does the creation of the sun and the moon on the fourth day mean? Gregorius' answer is as follows: the light which was mentioned on the first day was not wholly uniform. There were different kinds of light: sunlight, light from the various kinds of stars. Therefore, in the days before the fourth day, a selection took place in the element of light whereby parts of the different sorts of light joined together. The creation of the sun etc. on the fourth day indicates the completion of this process.

<sup>37</sup> *Apol.* c. 14 Forbes; PG 76D; in c. 19 Forbes, PG 81 C, he mentions τὸ τῶν νοητῶν δυνάμεων πλήρωμα.

(Genesis 1:7). Gregory devotes about half of his treatise to a long discussion which is meant to show that that term cannot be taken in its ordinary sense. Just as we found in the case of Basil, this reality has a noetic character, as do the ideas, but falls outside what is indicated by 'heaven and earth' in the biblical text.

In Augustine this changes. He takes 'heaven and earth' to be the totality of what is created, both spiritual and material. 'Heaven' represents the spiritual reality, 'earth' whatever has a material character. Moreover Augustine in both cases introduces the distinction between what is unformed (matter) and what has received form. The unformed aspect of material reality has already been sufficiently explained above. What he means by unformed spiritual matter is clearly indicated in the last commentary that he devotes to the creation account, *De Genesi ad litteram*. The spiritually unformed substance is 'spiritual life as it is potentially in itself, without being turned to the Creator. By conversion towards the Creator this life receives form and perfection. But if it does not turn to him, it remains without form.'<sup>38</sup>

It is possible, Augustine writes, to interpret the words of Genesis 1:1 so that they mean that God in the beginning (that is, in His eternal Word) created the unformed spiritual realm (= the heaven) and the unformed material realm (= the earth). Both unformed realities are indicated in the text: in the case of the earth in the words 'the earth was invisible and unstructured'; in the case of the heaven in what follows 'darkness was above the abyss'.<sup>39</sup>

But, the Bishop of Hippo continues, it is also possible that 'heaven' signifies the formed spiritual reality, which attained its

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<sup>38</sup> *De gen. ad lit.* I 2, 2: *Spiritualis scilicet vita, sicuti esse potest in se, non conversa ad Creatorem, tali enim conversione formatur atque perficitur; si autem non convertatur informis est; Cf. I 3, 7; I 4, 9. In I 5, 10 the created spiritual being is compared with the uncreated Word of God. 'The Word of God, namely the Son, knows no unformed state because "Being", "life" and "wisdom" are identical in Him. But the spiritual creature, which seems to be closer to the Word of God, can have a unformed life because, although "being" and "life" are identical in it, "life" and "living wisely and blissfully" are not. For if it turns away from the unchangeable Wisdom it becomes foolish and unhappy, and this constitutes its unformed state.'* (*Non enim habet informem vitam Verbum Filius, cui non solum hoc est esse quod vivere, sed etiam hoc est vivere quod est sapienter ac beate vivere. Creatura vero, quamquam spiritualis et intellectualis vel rationalis, quae videtur esse illi Verbo propinquior, potest habere informem vitam; quia non sicut hoc est ei esse quod vivere, ita hoc vivere quod sapienter ac beate vivere. Aversa enim a sapientia incommutabili, stulte ac misere vivit, quae informitas eius est.*)

<sup>39</sup> *De Gen. ad lit.* I 1, 3.

perfection and felicity from the very beginning (i.e. it in fact never knew a state of unformed existence), whereas 'earth' denotes the unformed material reality.<sup>40</sup> We are not told in this work which alternative has his preference. He also admits the possibility of other interpretations of the opening words of Genesis.<sup>41</sup> It may be that only the material reality is meant, in which case it is possible that 'heaven and earth' signifies the totality of the material reality in a formed or unformed state.<sup>42</sup> The spiritual realm would then be left out of account, as was also the case in the interpretations of Basil and Gregory.

In the work written earlier, the *Confessions*, he takes a different line. Here he devotes an entire book, the twelfth, to the interpretation of 'heaven and earth'. In this exegesis he indicates a clear preference for the view that 'heaven' indicates the formed spiritual realm, while 'earth' signifies the unformed material realm. In the first sixteen chapters of this book he develops this interpretation in a variety of formulations. The 'heaven' of Genesis 1:1 is what Psalm 113:16 calls *caelum caeli*, 'heaven of heaven', i.e. heaven *par excellence* or the highest heaven;<sup>43</sup> it is the 'created wisdom',<sup>44</sup> the 'house of God' ('house' here is to be taken as household or family which is wholly directed towards the Paterfamilias, God). The 'heaven' which is primarily formed (*primitus formatum*) is contrasted with that which is wholly formless (*penitus informe*).<sup>45</sup> In *Conf.* XII 7 Augustine's formulation is perhaps the clearest: the 'heaven' is 'close to God' (*prope te*), the 'earth' is close to nothing (*prope nihil*). From all these pronouncements it is apparent that he wishes to understand heaven and earth as representing the two extremes of creation, the highest (thus formed) spiritual realm and the lowest (thus unformed) material realm.

At *Conf.* XII 17 Augustine places in the mouth of his opponents that in their view Moses did not envisage those two extremes (*non*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *De Gen. ad lit.* I 1, 2.

<sup>42</sup> See J. Pépin, "Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression *caelum caeli* dans le livre XII des *Confessions* de S. Augustin", *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 23 (1953) 185-274. This article was reprinted in the collection "Ex Platonicorum persona". *Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin*, Amsterdam 1977. In the introduction to this book the author deals with the criticism that his pioneering article had aroused (see p. XVII-XXVIII).

<sup>43</sup> Compare the similar Hebraisms: *Canticum canticorum*; *Sancta sanctorum*.

<sup>44</sup> *Conf.* XII 15.

<sup>45</sup> *Conf.* XII 14.

*ea tamen duo Moyses intuebatur*), and then sums up four other interpretations: (A) 'heaven and earth' would either indicate only the material realm, either in (1) formed or in (2) unformed state; or (B) 'heaven' would represent the spiritual and 'earth' the material realm, and in both cases (1, 2) either the formed or the unformed state could be meant. As was said above, Augustine opposes these four interpretations to his own. I say this with some emphasis because Jean Pépin in his article in 1953 vigorously defended the view that Augustine too in this 12th book of the *Confessions* supported the view that 'heaven' indicates the *unformed* material reality. But this would mean that in *Conf.* XII 17 he included his own view among those which he attributed to his opponents and opposed to his own. This implication did not escape Pépin,<sup>46</sup> but he apparently did not regard it as unsurmountable for his interpretation. On this matter we find ourselves in disagreement with him.

There is another consideration that blocks Pépin's interpretation. This is located in the expression *caelum caeli* itself. The French scholar appears to take for granted that, since Augustine distinguishes between the spiritual reality in a formed and unformed state, the expression *caelum caeli*, which is used for that spiritual reality, can indicate both these states of being. This seems to me impossible, however, because *caelum caeli*, just as for example *sancta sanctorum*, denotes the highest possible state. But this applies only to spiritual reality in its formed state. Only this is, to quote Augustine's words in *Conf.* XII 7, 'close to God'. A further proof that *caelum caeli* only signifies the *formed* spiritual reality is given in the way that Augustine speaks about it in the following texts: ... *hoc totum, quod caelum et terra appellatum est, adhuc informis et tenebrosa materies erat, unde fieret caelum intelligibile, quod alibi dicitur caelum caeli* ... (this totality, which is called heaven and earth, so far was an unformed and dark material, out of which was made the intelligible heaven, which elsewhere is called the 'heaven of heaven', XII 21). This

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<sup>46</sup> This is apparent from his statements on p. 202 (in the middle) and p. 203 n. 4 (at the end) of his article from 1953. On p. 199 (at the end) he remarks on the fact that there is a "gauchissement" in Augustine's argument when he says that *it is possible that Moses when using the word heaven did not mean the formed spiritual creation but the unformed*. This statement can only mean one thing, namely, that Augustine gives priority to the view that heaven is the formed spiritual reality; the second view is presented as another contrasting possibility. Here once again Pépin has to find a serious inconsistency in Augustine's argument. See my further article at p. 151–57 in this volume.

means that *caelum caeli* is what *arises out of* the unformed spiritual reality. In the unformed state there can be no question of a *caelum caeli*. Moreover in XIII 5 he speaks of an unformed spiritual reality which remains in a state of flux, unless it directs itself towards God and becomes the *caelum caeli*. Finally in Book XII it is this *caelum caeli* which is also called *sapientia* (wisdom). Surely 'wisdom' can only be said of the spiritual world in a formed state, for the unformed state, i.e. the state of being turned away from God, is the opposite of wisdom. We conclude that *caelum caeli* can only signify the formed spiritual reality. It is clear that Augustine distinguishes an unformed and formed stage in the spiritual reality, but that in *Conf.* XII he interprets the term 'heaven' as indicating the formed spiritual creatures, i.e. those whose being is directed towards God.

When Augustine makes this distinction between what is formed and unformed in the spiritual or intelligible realm, he is following the lead of Plotinus, who posits this distinction in all things that are found outside the One, i.e. also in the second hypostasis, the Nous (Intellect).<sup>47</sup> In all things outside the One there is a stage of emergence, which means a turning away from the source which is the One, and a stage of turning back towards that source, which Plotinus calls the movement of ἐπιστροφή, while Augustine speaks of *conversio*. In the case of Plotinus the Nous is the highest spiritual reality outside the One. When Augustine speaks about the spiritual realm he thinks first of all of the heavenly hosts of which the Bible speaks on many occasions. These heavenly powers are wholly directed towards God from the outset, though they do have

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<sup>47</sup> This distinction is also found in one of Calcidius' texts which probably derives from Origen's commentary on Genesis (see J.C.M. van Winden, *Calcidius on Matter. His Doctrine and Sources. A chapter in the history of Platonism*. Leiden 1965<sup>2</sup>, 64): *Quod si facta est a Deo silva corporea quondam informis, quam Scriptura terram vocat, non est, opinor, desperandum incorporei quoque generis fore intelligibilem silvam quae caeli nomine sit nuncupata* (Calcidius, *In Platonis Timaeum commentarius*, 278, 283, 8–11 Waszink); see Pépin's Introduction in the 1977 edition of his collected essays, (see n. 42), p. XXIV. One cannot yet see in this text how this *materia incorporea* (Calcidius uses the term *silva* to translate the Greek work ὕλη) should be understood and the term *conversio* is also missing. It is possible to find other texts in Origen's work in which knowing God is what *forms* man. In his Commentary on the Gospel of John he says that at the end of time there will be just one activity, namely by those who have come to Him by the Logos of God, and this activity consists in knowing God; in this way they will all, formed by the knowledge of the Father (μορφωθέντες), become sons of God just as now the Son only exists through his knowledge of the Father (*In Joh.* I 16, 92).

the possibility of turning themselves away, of becoming unformed. But all the other spiritual creatures also belong to this reality, provided they are turned towards God; as such they form the 'created wisdom', the 'house of God'.<sup>48</sup>

This created spiritual reality is called in Greek νοητόν, in Latin (*mundus*) *intelligibilis* or *intellectualis* and *spiritualis*. One might say that here the Platonic ideas live on at a created level. They have, however, been transformed from impersonal forms to living, spiritual beings, whose form attains perfection in being directed towards the creator. This conception, inspired by the philosophy of Plotinus, was to prove enormously influential in the development of Christian thought.

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<sup>48</sup> See above p. 142.

## NOTIZ ÜBER ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ BEI GREGOR VON NYSSA

Wer bei Gregor die Aussage findet, daß das Getreidekorn (der Samen) τῇ δυνάμει die fertige Getreidepflanze sei, wird sich vielleicht ein wenig über die Verwendung des bestimmten Artikels wundern, seine Gedanken werden sich jedoch von selbst in die Richtung des aristotelischen τὸ δυνάμει ὄν bewegen. Aber wenn Gregor anderswo behauptet, daß die Ähre τῇ δυνάμει das Korn (der Samen), aus dem es gewachsen ist, sei, dann muß dies Erstaunen erregen. Dasselbe gilt von der Behauptung, daß der Leib τῇ δυνάμει die Nahrung sei. Auch diese Aussage findet man bei Gregor neben der umgekehrten, nämlich daß die Nahrung (τῇ) δυνάμει der Leib sei.

Eine Besprechung dieser merkwürdigen Sachlage schien mir ein passender Beitrag zur Festschrift zu Ehren einer Gelehrten, die sich so intensiv mit Gregors Schriften befaßt hat und deren Aufmerksamkeit sich hierbei stets wieder bis auf die kleinsten Detailumstände gerichtet hat.

In diesem Beitrag sollen nun zunächst die am deutlichsten mit dem aristotelischen δύνάμις-Begriff verwandten Stellen untersucht und dann die Interpretation der andersartigen Stellen behandelt werden.

1. Bei Aristoteles ist das δυνάμει ὄν zunächst mit der Materie verbunden. Bekanntlich haben die frühchristlichen Bibelexegeten in der Aussage über die Erde in Genesis 1,2—es handelt sich um die Übersetzung des berühmten *tohu a bohu*—eine Verweisung nach der Materie gefunden. Gregor erörtert diesen Text von Genesis 1,2 in seiner Apologie des Hexaemerons seines Bruders Basilius. Die Kapitel 16 und 17 (nach der Einteilung der Ausgabe von G.H. Forbes, Burntisland 1855 = Migne PG 44, 77D–80C) enthalten eine Besprechung der verschiedenen griechischen Übersetzungen des Genesistextes, nämlich der der Septuaginta, der von Aquila, Symmachus und Theodotion.

Aristoteles am nächsten befindet sich Gregor bei der Auslegung der Übersetzung von Aquila; diese lautet: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν κένωμα καὶ οὐθέν. Diese Übersetzung wird von ihm folgendermaßen erklärt: τὴν γὰρ χωρητικὴν τῶν ποιότητων δύναμιν τῇ τοῦ κενώματος φωνῇ παρεδήλωσεν, ὥστε διὰ τούτου μαθεῖν, ὅτι δεκτικὴν δύναμιν τῶν

ποιότητων ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κτίστης προεβάλετο· κενὴ δέ τις ἦν αὕτη καὶ ἐν ἑαυτῇ εἶχεν οὐθέν, πρὶν συμπληρωθῆναι αὐτὴν ταῖς ποιότησι. Es handelt sich nach Gregor also um die *dynamis*, die 'Raum bietend' und 'empfangend' ist. Diese Andeutungen wollen die von Aquila gebrauchten Worte 'Leere' und 'Nichts' erklären, die deutlich in die Richtung einer 'Erde' weisen, die an sich nichts ist und nur den Eigenschaften gegenüber, die ihr [148] hinzugefügt werden, als Empfangendes fungiert. Sie ist eine 'Leere', die gefüllt werden muß. Damit kommt sie der ganz passiven Materie, wie sie gewöhnlich in der Geschichte der Philosophie dem Aristoteles zugeschrieben wird, sehr nahe.

2. In demselben Kapitel erklärt Gregor auch die Übersetzung des Symmachus: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀργὸν καὶ ἀδιάκριτον, und sagt über die Bedeutung von ἀργόν Folgendes: δηλοῦται ... διὰ μὲν τοῦ ἀργοῦ, ὅτι ἐνεργεῖα μὲν οὐπω ἦν· ἐν μόνῃ δὲ τῇ δυνάμει τὸ εἶναι εἶχε. Hier trifft man die aristotelische Gegenüberstellung von ἐνεργεῖα und δυνάμει an. Es fällt zwar auf, daß bei δυνάμει der bestimmte Artikel verwendet wird, dies läßt sich jedoch nach μόνῃ leicht erklären. Man kann also auch hier gewiß von einer aristotelischen Verwendung von δυνάμει sprechen.

3. Im 16. Kapitel seiner Apologie erwähnt Gregor die Übersetzung der Septuaginta: ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, und sagt dann, daß aus diesen Worten hervorgeht, daß am Anfang, als Gott Himmel und Erde schuf, alles τῇ δυνάμει da war in dem Sinne, daß die Keimkräfte aller Dinge in 'Himmel und Erde' vorhanden waren. In Gregors eigenen Worten; γέγραπται γάρ, ὅτι ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος· ὡς ἐκ τούτου δῆλον εἶναι ὅτι τῇ μὲν δυνάμει τὰ πάντα ἦν ἐν πρώτῃ τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ τὴν κτίσιν ὁρμῇ, οἶον εἰ σπέρματικῆς τινος δυνάμεως πρὸς τὴν τοῦ παντὸς γένεσιν καταβληθείσης, ἐνεργεῖα δὲ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον οὐπω ἦν. Hier findet man abermals den Gegensatz δυνάμει~ἐνεργεῖα aber noch abgesehen von der Tatsache, daß bei δυνάμει der bestimmte Artikel verwendet wird, ist es auch deutlich, daß *dynamis* in diesem Abschnitt eine viel aktivere Bedeutung als in den obengenannten Fällen hat. Die Terminologie σπερματικὴ δύναμις läßt an die stoische Lehre denken. Man könnte τῇ δυνάμει hier vielleicht am besten mit "auf Grund der Kraft, die in ihr ist" paraphrasieren.

Man darf auch nicht vergessen, daß diese Bedeutung auch dem Aristoteles nicht fremd war. In seinem Beitrag zur Festschrift für Joseph Owens (*Graceful Reason*, Toronto 1983) hat W.J. Verdenius

mit Recht darauf hingewiesen, daß man die Materie-Lehre des Aristoteles im Rahmen seinen Hylozoismus betrachten sollte. Das impliziert, daß in seinem δυνάμει ὄν die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Terminus δύναμις noch vorhanden ist. Verdenius verweist nach G.A. 1, 19, 726 b 15–19, wo vom Samen gesagt wird, daß er δυνάμει der künftige Organismus sei, da er eine gewisse Kraft in sich habe (ἔχει τινὰ δύνανιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ); Verdenius spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von einer Idee von 'self-development', die im aristotelischen System, gerade wegen des Hylozoismus, zu entdecken sei.

4. Das Bild des Samens führt uns zu jenem Abschnitt in Gregors *De hominis opificio*, auf den in der Einleitung dieses Beitrags angespielt wurde, in dem behauptet wird, daß im Getreide—gemeint ist im Getreidekorn—, wie auch in andersartigen Samen, das ganze künftige Wachstum schon vorgegeben und vorhanden sei: 'Ἄλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ σίτῳ φαμέν ἢ ἐν ἐτέρῳ τινὶ τῶν σπερμάτων ἅπαν ἐμπεριελήφθαι τῇ δυνάμει τὸ κατὰ τὸν στάχυν εἶδος, τὸν χόρτον, τὴν καλάμην, κτλ. (c.29 P.G. 44,236 A). Bemerkenswert ist hier, daß Gregor von dem Vorhandensein des εἶδος der Ähre im Samen spricht (τὸ κατὰ τὸν στάχυν εἶδος). Das bedeutet so viel wie die Anwesenheit der Form [149] in der Materie, ja man könnte sogar sagen, daß die *dynamis* in der Materie die Form sei, womit Aristoteles nicht mehr einverstanden sein könnte.

5. Diese Entwicklung setzt sich fort, wenn Gregor in der Einleitung zu seiner Apologie das Hexaemeron seines Bruders—die berühmten neun predigten—mit dem schöpfungsbericht der Genesis vergleicht. Er behauptet dort, daß Kenner das Werk des Basilius ebensosehr bewundern wie das des Moses; und mit Recht, so fährt er fort, da das Werk des Basilius sich zu dem des Moses verhalte wie die Ähre zum Samen; und bei der Ausarbeitung dieses Verhältnisses stellt er folgenden Vergleich: ὄν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον πρὸς τὸν κόκκον ὁ ἄσταχυς, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ὦν, κάκεινο μὴ ὦν, μᾶλλον δέ, ἐκείνο μὲν ὦν τῇ δυνάμει, παρηλλαγμένος δὲ μεγέθει καὶ κάλλει καὶ ποικιλίᾳ καὶ σχήματι· τὸν αὐτὸν εἶποι τις ἂν ἐπέχειν λόγον πρὸς τὴν τοῦ μεγάλου Μωυσέως φωνὴν τὰ παρὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Βασιλείου διὰ φιλοπονωτέρας θεωρίας ἐξεργασθέντα νοήματα. Dem unter 4 behandelten Text zufolge kann man sagen, daß hier behauptet wird, daß in der fertigen Ähre dieselbe Kraft wie im Samenkorn vorhanden ist. Hier ist der Gegensatz δυνάμει~ἐνεργείᾳ ganz verschwunden. Gregor hätte auch schwerlich behaupten können,

daß Moses' Schöpfungsbericht sich zu den Predigten des Basilius verhalte wie τὸ δυνάμει ὄν zu τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ. Dies würde bedeuten, daß Moses' Werk das unvollkommene wäre und Basilius' Predigten über der Bibel stünden. Was Gregor beabsichtigt, ist, das Werk seines Bruders auf eine Ebene mit der heiligen Schrift zu bringen. Er behauptet auch ausdrücklich, daß die Kenner Basilius' Werk nicht geringer (οὐδὲν ἔλαττον) als die Schrift des Moses schätzten. Das ist ja wohl das höchste noch zulässige Lob. Damit stellt sich auch heraus, daß τῇ δυνάμει hier nicht gegenüber ἐνεργείᾳ steht, sondern daß in der fertigen Ähre *dieselbe* δύναμις wie im Samenkorn ist. Zu dieser Verwendung des *dynamis*-Begriffes ist Gregor unter Einfluß der δύναμις σπερματική-Idee der Stoa gekommen. Man kann sogar behaupten, daß τῇ δυνάμει hier nahezu die Bedeutung 'wesentlich' hat, insoweit die *dynamis* einer Entität tatsächlich deren Wesen formt. Gregor stellt hier fest, daß die fertige Ähre 'wesentlich' das Samenkorn sei, nur die Akzidenten, wie Größe, Schönheit u.s.w., sind verschiedenartig.

6. Dieselbe Verwendung der δύναμις findet man in einem Abschnitt der *Oratio Catechetica*, wo Gregor eine 'physische' Erklärung der Eucharistie liefert. Grundgedanke dieser Auslegung ist, daß der Gläubige durch den Kontakt mit dem Leib Christi geheiligt wird, der durch Einwohnung des Wortes Gottes zu göttliche Würde erhoben würde: τὸ δὲ σῶμα τῇ ἐνοικήσει τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου πρὸς θεϊκὴν ἀξίαν μετεποιήθη (p. 149, 1 Srawley). Nun wurde der Leib Christi durch Essen und Trinken genährt, und so wurde die Nahrung zur genannten göttlichen Würde erhoben. Etwas Derartiges findet bei der Eucharistie statt: an die Stelle der Nahrungsaufnahme tritt hier das göttliche Wort, das sagt: 'das ist mein Leib', und so wird dieses Brot zum Leib Christi und kommt der Empfangende in Kontakt mit diesem heiligen Leib.

Im Laufe dieser Auseinandersetzung sagt Gregor zunächst: Wer Brot und Wein sieht, sieht δυνάμει den damit genährten Leib (ὁ πρὸς ταῦτα (= Brot und Wein) βλέπων δυνάμει πρὸς τὸν ὄγκον τοῦ ἡμετέρου σώματος βλέπει, p. 146, 12-3 Sr.). Insoweit diese Aussage dasselbe bedeutet wie 'Brot und Wein sind δυνάμει der genährte Leib', kann man behaupten, daß sie aristotelisch ist. Seltsamerweise verwendet Gregor hier das [150] δυνάμει ohne Artikel, aber im weiteren Verlauf des Kapitels kommt auch τῇ δυνάμει vor, und zwar im unter 5 besprochenen Sinn, wie sich im nächsten Paragraphen herausstellt.

7. Wie gesagt spielt der Prozeß von Essen und Trinken eine wichtige Rolle in der Auseinandersetzung über die Eucharistie in *Oratio Catechetica* c. 37. Gregor kommt dort zur folgenden Aussage über den Leib des historischen Christus: καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνο τὸ σῶμα ἄρτος τῇ δυνάμει ἦν, ἡγιασθη δὲ τῇ ἐνοικήσει τοῦ λόγου τοῦ σκηνώσαντος ἐν τῇ σαρκί: "Denn auch dieser Leib war τῇ δυνάμει Brot, er wurde jedoch durch die Einwohnung des Wortes, das im Fleisch seine Wohnung genommen hat, geheiligt" (p. 49, 4–5 Sr.).

In seinem Kommentar in der Edition der *Oratio Catechetica* von 1903 weist J.H. Srawley auf den Unterschied zwischen dieser Stelle und der unter Nummer 6 besprochenen hin. Dort wurde vom Brot gesagt, daß es 'virtually' der Leib sei, da es fähig sei, sich in den Leib zu wandeln; hier heißt es jedoch, daß der Leib Christi 'virtually' Brot sei, da das Brot in den Leib gewandelt worden wäre. Anlässlich des unter 6 erörterten Textes hatte Srawley bemerkt, daß δυνάμει dort in aristotelischem Sinn, als dem ἐνεργεία-Begriff entgegengesetzt, gebraucht würde, und zu dem hier in Rede stehenden Satz behauptet er, daß Gregor 'similarly' von menschlichen Leib Christi behauptet habe, daß er τῇ δυνάμει Brot wäre.

## ONCE AGAIN CAELUM CAELI

### Is Augustine's Argument in *Confessions* XII consistent?

Augustine devotes two books of his *Confessions* to the explanation of the first verse of Genesis. Book XI deals with the expression *In principio*, Book XII with *caelum et terram*. It is evident that these words about the beginning of things fascinated him greatly. And he was not the first Christian thinker who occupied himself with them. The question of the origin of the world, that central problem of Greek philosophy, had been discussed by all major Christian thinkers before him (and earlier than them by Philo of Alexandria). The meditations in *Conf.* XI–XII may be considered as a comprehensive survey of these discussions, to which the bishop of Hippo added his own views on the subject.

The obvious sense of the words 'God created heaven and earth' is, of course, that God created the totality of the visible world; 'heaven', the highest element, and 'earth', the lowest, embrace, so to speak, the totality of the visible creation. But was the visible world the only thing that was created? Was there not a spiritual world, too? And was that perhaps indicated by 'heaven'? Moreover, when the earth was said to be 'invisible and without order', was that perhaps an indication of formless matter, that central idea in Greek philosophy? And, in the light of the distinction between matter and form introduced by Neoplatonist thought in the spiritual world as well, could it be the case that the idea of spiritual matter was to be located in the darkness above the abyss of Gen. 1:2? All these speculations are reflected in book XII of Augustine's *Confessions*. Particularly the Plotinian distinction between spiritual matter and form appealed to him: when the mind is turned away from the One, it is formless; it becomes formed by turning itself to the One (ἐπιστροφή). Translated into Augustine's terms this means that, as long as the spiritual creature is not turned to its creator, its life is formless, but by turning itself to him, it receives form and comes to its perfection (cf. *De Genesi ad litteram* I, 3: *tenebrosam abyssum intellegamus naturam vitae informem, nisi convertatur ad creatorem, quo solo modo formari potest*).[906]

*The Argument of Confessions XII*

*Confessions* XII consists of three main parts: 1. chs. 1–13, in which Augustine gives his own interpretation of ‘heaven and earth’; 2. chs. 14–25, in which he deals with his opponents in relation to this interpretation and sums up the different opinions which they put forward; he also draws the limits within which an acceptable interpretation should move; 3. a final part in which he, *inter alia*, brings the opinions of his opponents which he considers acceptable and his own view together.

*ad* 1. The ‘heaven’ about which Gen. 1:1 speaks, Augustine affirms, is not the heaven, the firmament, which we see with our eyes, but the *caelum caeli* of which Psalm 105, 16 speaks: *caelum caeli domino, terram autem dedit filiis hominum*. That means: the heaven of Gen. 1:1 is a spiritual reality, a spiritual creation, which Augustine indicates by a series of names: *caelum intellectuale, caelum intellegibile, spiritualis vel intellectualis creatura, sapientia, domus dei*, etc.

In 1953 J. Pépin published a famous article on this concept of the *caelum caeli*, entitled ‘Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l’expression *caelum caeli* dans le livre XII des *Confessions* de s. Augustin’.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the *sense* of this expression he comes to the conclusion that it indicates the spiritual creation *in its formless state*. He admits that some texts in book XII seem to point in another direction, but a clear statement in the second chapter of *Conf. XIII* compels him to take this position. Augustine’s argument in *Conf. XII* is, in his view, far from ideal, as appears from his conclusion: “Voilà l’exégèse que les *Confessions* proposent de *caelum* et de *caelum caeli*, telle qu’on a essayé de la systématiser à partir d’éléments épars, parfois contradictoires, exprimés avec plus de lyrisme que de clarté” (p. 204).

Twenty years later, in the *Festschrift Waszink*,<sup>2</sup> I contested this opinion and defended the view that, according to Augustine, the ‘heaven and earth’ of Gen. 1:1 indicated the *formed* spiritual creation on the one hand and the *formless* corporeal (matter) on the other; in other words, ‘heaven and earth’ indicate the extremities of

<sup>1</sup> *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 23 (1953), p. 185–274.

<sup>2</sup> *Romanitas et Christianitas*, edd. W. den Boer *et alii*. Amsterdam-London, North Holl. Publ. Comp., 1973. “The Early Christian Exegesis of ‘Heaven and Earth’ in Gen. 1:1”; esp. p. 378–380. See p. 94–106 in this volume.

the created [907] world, embraced by the highest spiritual and the lowest corporeal creature, or, to express it with Augustine's own words: *duo quaedam, unum prope te* (= God) *alterum prope nihil, unum, quo superior tu esses, alterum, quo inferius nihil esset* (*Conf.* XII 7, end), and, in even clearer terms: *duo haec, primitus formatum et penitus informe* (*Conf.* XII 13).

In 1977 Pépin re-edited the above mentioned article, together with some other studies on philosophic themes in Augustine.<sup>3</sup> In the introduction to this collection he took the opportunity to answer his critics. Concerning the nature of *caelum caeli* he stuck to his earlier opinion, viz. that in *Conf.* XII Augustine interprets the 'heaven' and 'earth' of Gen. 1:1 as representing the spiritual and corporeal matter and thus understands *caelum caeli* as the spiritual creature in its formless state. He knew quite well that this interpretation had several inconvenient aspects: a) there are statements in Augustine's argument which seem to contradict this view (Pépin speaks of "*un gauchissement dans l'attitude d'Augustin*", 'Recherches', p. 199); b) this opinion appears to be one of those ascribed to his opponents ("il compte en gros quatre interprétations défendables, *en y comprenant d'ailleurs celle que l'on a reconnue plus haut pour la sienne*; *ibid.*, p. 202, cf. also p. 203, n. 4); c) he also admits that the name *caelum caeli* fits better with a formed nature, and adds that *sometimes* Augustine does indicate the formed spiritual nature by that term (*ibid.*, p. 201; he cites *Conf.* XIII 5, a text which will be discussed below); but notwithstanding all this he continues to maintain that in Augustine's view *caelum caeli* should be understood as the spiritual creation in its formless state.

The deepest reason for this uncomfortable position lies, if I am not mistaken, in the fact that Pépin does not see how the following two theses are compatible: (a) in the spiritual creation Augustine discerns two phases, a formless and a formed one; in other words the spiritual creation has a hylomorphic structure; and (b) Augustine interprets 'heaven' and 'earth' in Gen. 1:1 as 'the *formed* spiritual creation' and 'the *formless* corporeal creation'. Now it is

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<sup>3</sup> "Ex Platonicorum persona". *Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin*, Amsterdam, Hakkert, 1977. In his most recent comment on *Confessions* XII (*Le Confessioni di Agostino d'Ipippona. Lectio Augustini. Settimana agostiniana Pavese. 4. Edizioni Augustinus, Palermo, 1987, p. 67-95: 'Le livre XII des Confessions ou exégèse et confession'*), Pépin leaves the present problem aside (p. 67). Those who wonder how the exegesis of this biblical text fits into his 'Confessions' will find an answer in this article.

evident that Augustine takes the position sub (a); Pépin stresses it again and again: "qui fait [908] clairement état de *deux stades* dans l'histoire de la créature spirituelle" ('Recherches', p. 200); "La créature spirituelle est susceptible d'une *double condition*" (*ibid.*); "était susceptible de *deux états*, l'un informe, l'autre formé" (*ibid.*, p. 201); "structure hylémorphique" (*ibid.*, p. 202). Thus he has to reject the position under (b) and to accept the problems to which this leads. In my previous article I stated that these two theses are not irreconcilable, but my view was insufficiently elaborated and probably for that reason failed to convince.

There is, I submit, a possibility of explaining Augustine's argument in such a manner that there is no question of contradiction, not even of inconsistency. One is thus obliged to take his explanation in *Conf.* XII chs. 1–13 at face value and to assume that he understands *caelum caeli* as 'the spiritual creature *in its formed state*' (cf. *primitus formatum*, mentioned above). We now follow first his argument in chs. 14 ss.

*ad* 2. After discussing with his imaginary opponents the opinion defended in chs. 1–13, Augustinus puts the following words in their mouth: *quamvis vera sint haec, non ea tamen duo Moyses intuebatur, cum revelante spiritu diceret: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram* (*Conf.* XII 17). Thus the opponents concede that what Augustine says is not untrue, but they claim that Moses did not mean 'these two'. And what he means by 'those two' Augustine explains in the following words: *non caeli nomine spiritualem vel intellectualem illam creaturam semper faciem dei contemplantem significavit, nec terrae nomine informem materiam*. Thus Augustine explicitly states that in chs. 1–13 he defended the thesis that 'heaven' in Gen. 1:1 means 'that spiritual or intellectual creation which always beholds the face of God'. Now this is an other way of stating that heaven indicates the spiritual creature *in its formed state*, since the spiritual nature is formed precisely by its conversion to (= contemplation of ) God.

Having formulated his own opinion once again in this way, Augustine sums up the interpretations of his opponents (ch. 17). Although he does not endorse them, he does not regard them as impossible.

There is first the opinion of those who understand 'heaven and earth' as indicating the totality of the visible world. 'God created heaven and earth' means 'God created the whole visible world'

(*totum istum visibilem mundum*). This is a simple, 'unphilosophical' interpretation, whereby the text of Gen. 1:1 becomes a kind of title or heading, in which the contents of the following chapter is shortly indicated [909] (*universaliter et breviter significare voluit*). There then follows an enumeration of the possible 'philosophical' interpretations: 'heaven and earth' indicate either the visible creation *only* or the visible (corporeal) *and* the invisible (spiritual) creation; in both cases there are again two possibilities: 'heaven and earth' indicate the creation concerned either in its *formed* state or in its *formless* state.

For our purpose the last possibility demands attention: 'heaven and earth' indicate the visible and the invisible (spiritual) creature both in their formless state. According to Pépin, this opinion, ascribed to the opponents here, would coincide with Augustine's own view in ch. 1–13. However, this is in flagrant contradiction with Augustine's words at the beginning of ch. 17, quoted above ('not those two'). If one assumes that Augustine opted for a position which is different from those of his opponents, viz. that 'heaven' means the spiritual creature in its formed state and 'earth' the corporeal creature in its formless state, the argument becomes consistent. The third part of *Conf.* XII will confirm this view.

*ad 3.* In one chapter of this final part (ch. 28) Augustine gives a survey of the possible interpretations of Genesis 1:1. In this survey the following passage is important for our purpose: *Atque in eis, qui intellegunt in principio, quod in sapientia fecit caelum et terram, alius eorum ipsum caelum et terram, creabilem materiam caeli et terrae, sic esse credit cognominatam, alius iam formatas distinctasque naturas, alius unam formatam eandemque spiritalem caeli nomine, aliam informem corporalis materiae terrae nomine.* The latter opinion is evidently the one defended by Augustine himself in the first part of *Conf.* XII. It is worthwhile to observe that in *De Genesi ad lit.* one finds a similar survey of possible opinions with regard to the interpretations of Gen. 1:1; there, too, he first sums up the interpretations ascribed to the opponents in *Conf.* XII 17 (*De Gen. ad lit.* 1,2) and then continues as follows: *An caelum intellegendum est creatura spiritualis, ab exordio quo facta est perfecta et beata semper, terra vero corporalis materies adhuc imperfecta ...?* Here, too, one finds the formed spiritual creature put together with the formless corporeal. At any rate it must be clear that Augustine's argument in *Conf.* XII is consistent.[910]

*What, then, about Confessions XIII?*

As was said above, Pépin was aware of the fact that his interpretation compelled him to ascribe to Augustine some serious inconsistencies, but felt he could not avoid this, because *Conf. XIII 2* did not admit another solution. There Augustine says: *Quid te meruerunt spiritalis corporalisque natura, quas fecisti in sapientia tua, ut inde penderent etiam inchoata et informia quaeque in genero suo spiritali vel corporali euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem ... nisi per idem verbum revocarentur ad unitatem tuam et formarentur*. From this text it is clear that in the spiritual creation there are two phases, a formless and a formed one, in other words, that the spiritual creatures have a hylomorphic structure. I agree with Pépin in this respect. But on the other hand it is evident that in the whole argument of *Conf. XII* Augustine understands 'heaven' in Gen. 1:1 as 'spiritual creature in its formed state'. How do these two theses go together?

I think that Augustine's interpretation could be paraphrased as follows: "God created heaven and earth" means: God created all that has being, from the highest spiritual creatures in their formed state (= *caelum caeli*) to the lowest corporeal creation (= *terra*). This statement is, so to speak, the title or heading above the creation story, which then begins as follows: "The earth was invisible and without order and darkness was above the abyss". This means: in both the corporeal and the spiritual creation one discerns a formless phase: it does not mean that there was a time in which this formless situation existed, but it is rather a reference to the hylomorphic structure of the whole creation.

This interpretation is confirmed by another text of *Conf. XIII*, where Augustine says: *et multa diximus de caelo caeli et de terra invisibili et incompressa et de abyso tenebrosa secundum spiritalis informitatis vagabunda deliquia, nisi converteretur ad eum, a quo erat qualiscumque vita, et inluminatione fieret speciosa vita, ut esset caelum caeli* (XIII 5). Here one finds the two clearly put together: the dark abyss as the spiritual formlessness and *caelum caeli* as the life of the mind turned to God, which is the spiritual creature in its formed state. (One should notice that the formless spiritual creation becomes *caelum caeli*: one finds the same idea in *Conf. XII 21*: *hoc totum, quod caelum et terra appellatum est, adhuc informis et tenebrosa materies erat, unde fieret caelum intellegibile, quod alibi dicitur caelum caeli*. With

regard to *Conf.* XIII 5, quoted just now, Pépin stated that Augustine [911] *sometimes* indicated the formed spiritual creation by this term. In my view, this 'sometimes' is out of place. *Caelum caeli* always refers to the spiritual creation in its formed state. Hence it was called, as was mentioned above, 'nearest to God (*prope te*) and 'first formed' (*primitus formatum*). It was also called '(created) *sapientia*' (*Conf.* XII 15). How could the mind in its formless state, *i.e.* being turned away from God, be said to be 'wise'?

Therefore, one cannot but conclude that:

1. the spiritual creature indicated by *caelum caeli* has a hylo-morphic structure; but the name *caelum caeli* is only applicable to that creature in its formed state.
2. Augustine's argument in *Conf.* XII is consistent. To show that this is indeed the case was the main purpose of this small contribution. For to me it was inconceivable that his argument on a subject-matter which he discussed so many times and which obviously fascinated him so much, could have been seriously inconsistent.



**PART TWO**  
**ESSAYS ON THE CHURCH FATHERS**



## NOTES ON ORIGEN, *CONTRA CELSUM*

Viro clarissimo

Petro J.G.A. Hendrix septuagenario

Commentaries form a very minor part of the immense output of patristic studies. This holds especially for the field of Greek patrology. One could even maintain that there are no commentaries worth while mentioning for the most important works of the Greek Fathers. However, the need for comments is urgent; and the present notes, one hopes, may underline this. They concern one of the most important works of the early Church, a work that has a satisfactory text tradition and has been translated several times: Origen's *Contra Celsum*. The latest edition<sup>1</sup> and a German translation<sup>2</sup> are by P. Koetschau. The latest English translation is by H. Chadwick,<sup>3</sup> whose work rightly earned the admiration of many reviewers. Still, neither the tradition as such nor the available translations solve our problems, not even those exclusively connected with the understanding of the Greek text. The following notes are meant to contribute to a better understanding of only some chapters of the first part of the first book.

I 2. – In this second chapter Origen quotes Celsus as saying that the barbarians—and the Jews, on whom the Christians depend, originate from them—are “*capable of discovering doctrines*”.<sup>4</sup> “But”, Origen continues, “he adds to this that *the Greeks are better able to judge the value of what the barbarians have discovered, and to establish the doctrines and put them* [202] *into practice by virtue*”.<sup>5</sup> The verbs used

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<sup>1</sup> *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*. Origenes I–II (Leipzig, 1899). In this edition the text supposed to be Celsus' own words is spaced out.

<sup>2</sup> *Des Origenes ausgewählte Schriften aus dem Griechischen übersetzt*. (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter 48, 52, 53) Munich, n.d.[1926–27].

<sup>3</sup> *Origen: Contra Celsum*. Translated with an introduction and notes (Cambridge, 1953); with a prefatory note reprinted 1965. Chadwick indicates by italics the quotations which, according to him, are Celsus' own words.

<sup>4</sup> I follow Chadwick's translation, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>5</sup> Chadwick's rendering of *πρὸς ἀρετὴν* “by virtue” seems incorrect. *Πρὸς* with acc. does not indicate means but aim or result. One could perhaps translate: “which results in virtue”.

here are κρίναι καὶ βεβαιώσασθαι καὶ ἀσκήσαι. Origen takes up Celsus' words, thus formulating an argument in defense of Christianity. It could be paraphrased as follows: 'a man who comes to the gospel with his Greek way of thinking will *judge that it is true* and by *putting it into practice* he will *prove* that it meets the requirements of a Greek proof'. In other words: the Greek who, according to Celsus, is able to judge the value of barbarian doctrines will judge that the Christian doctrine (or the gospel) is true. The text of Origen<sup>6</sup> runs as follows: ὅτι ἀπὸ Ἑλληνικῶν τις δογμάτων καὶ γυμνασίων ἐλθὼν ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον οὐ μόνον κρίνῃ ἂν αὐτὸν<sup>7</sup> ἀληθῆ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀσκήσας κατασκευάσαι ἂν καὶ τὸ δοκοῦν ἐλλίπες ὡς πρὸς Ἑλληνικὴν ἀπόδειξιν ἀναπληρώσαι, κατασκευάζων τὴν χριστιανισμοῦ ἀληθότητα. Chadwick translates: "A man coming to the gospel from Greek conceptions and training would not only *judge* that it was true, but would also *put it into practice* and so prove it to be correct; and he would complete what seemed to be lacking judged by the criterion of a Greek proof, thus establishing the truth of Christianity". Yet, the translations "*will ... judge that it is true*" and "*will prove by putting it into practice*", seem preferable; see the above given paraphrase. If the Greek must be read in the way given above, Chadwick is right in taking αὐτὸν ἀληθῆ (εἶναι) not only as the object of κρίνῃ ἂν but also of κατασκευάσαι ἂν.<sup>8</sup> (Hence his translation: "prove it to be correct".) The third verb ἀναπληρώσαι is commonly supposed to be an optative with the same function as the two previous verbs. Yet, editors and translators seem to have overlooked the absence here of the particle ἂν also influenced the third verb. Supposedly they presumed that this double ἂν also influenced the third verb. This, in fact, is highly improbable. For in that case Origen would have used the particle twice with two closely connected optatives, while he would have omitted to do so with the third which, moreover, is rather separated from the other optatives. Actually, this 'distance' of ἀναπληρώσαι is clearly revealed by the semicolon in Chadwick's translation.[203]

This raised the question whether ἀναπληρώσαι really is an optative with the same function as κρίνῃ ἂν and κατασκευάσαι ἂν.

<sup>6</sup> I follow the text of Koetschau, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>7</sup> Chadwick reads αὐτόν instead of αὐτά, as did Koetschau in his translation.

<sup>8</sup> Origen always uses the 3rd pers. sing. of the optative of the aoristus on -σαι instead of that on -σειε. Cf. Blass u. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 12. Aufl. §85.

Is it not more obvious to take it as an infinitive, and to read ἀναπληρῶσαι? This infinitive depends on κατασκευάσαι ἄν; its subject is αὐτόν, which is also the subject of ἀληθῇ (εἶναι). The meaning then is: "And by putting it into practice he will prove that it also offers what seemed to be lacking judged by the criterion of a Greek proof".

The reading ἀναπληρῶσαι (infinitive) is preferable to the commonly accepted ἀναπληρώσαι (optative) for the following reasons:

1) The supposed irregularity in the absence of ἄν disappears

2) The parallelism between the words of Celsus and Origen's answer becomes more obvious. The correspondence between the verbs κρίναι ~ κρίναι ἄν and ἀσκῆσαι ~ ἀσκήσας is self-evident; the third correspondence exists between βεβαιώσασθαι and κατασκευάσαι ἄν, two verbs which, indeed, have the same sense. The infinitive ἀναπληρῶσαι depends on κατασκευάσαι ἄν just as ἀληθῇ (εἶναι) depends on κρίναι ἄν. In the traditional reading the third optative (ἀναπληρώσαι) is only an appendix which disturbs the parallelism.

3) The infinitive presents a better textual construction and a clearer meaning. The subject of this verb now is the gospel itself and not the man who puts it into practice. The last one only proves that the gospel offers it. This seems better in accordance with Origen's opinion.

4) The decisive argument, however, is palaeographical: the fact namely that MS. Vat. lat. 386, on which all other manuscripts depend, reads ἀναπληρῶσαι. This clearly puts an end to any reasonable doubt. It was perhaps the merely external correspondence between three optatives and three infinitives, which enticed scribes and editors alike to alter the original version.

I 6. – Celsus has reproached the Christians for obtaining "*the power which they seem to possess by pronouncing the names of certain daemons and incantations*". Origen answers that they have that power by the name of Jesus, by which they even drive out the daemons. "In fact the name of Jesus is so powerful against the daemons that sometimes it is effective even when pronounced by bad men", as appears from Jesus' words in Mt. 7,22: "Many shall say to me in that day, In thy name we have cast out daemons and performed miracles".

But Celsus also attacks the Saviour himself, saying that "*it was by magic that he was able to do the miracles*". And because he was afraid

[204] that others would imitate him and “*boast that they did so by God’s power, Jesus expelled them from his society*”. In these last words, in Greek ἀπελαύνει τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πολιτείας, Bader<sup>9</sup> saw an allusion to Plato’s expelling Homer and the poets from his republic. This may be so. But it is far more important to ask oneself how Celsus could arrive at the statement that Jesus expelled these people from his society. The answer seems obvious. Celsus had in mind the verse of Mt. immediately following the one cited by Origen, in which there is question of expulsion: “And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you. *Depart from me, you that work iniquity*” (Mt. 7,23).

Then Origen continues: καὶ κατηγορεῖ αὐτοῦ ὅτι, εἰ δικαίως ἀπελαύνει καὶ αὐτὸς ἔνοχος ὢν τοῖς αὐτοῖς, φαῦλός ἐστιν· εἰ δ’ αὐτὸς οὐ φαῦλος ταῦτα ποιήσας, οὐδ’ οἱ ὁμοίως αὐτῷ πράττοντες. “He [i.e. Celsus] makes the accusation against him, that *if he was right in driving them out, although he was guilty of the same himself, he is a bad man; but if he is not a bad man for having done this, neither are they bad who acted as he did*”. The first part of this dilemma is rather contorted. There is, however, another possibility of reading this text. Instead of considering the words καὶ αὐτὸς ἔνοχος ὢν τοῖς αὐτοῖς as having a concessive character and belonging to δικαίως ἀπελαύνει, one may combine καὶ αὐτός with φαῦλός ἐστιν and give ἔνοχος ὢν τοῖς αὐτοῖς a causal meaning belonging to φαῦλος. In other words, one should put a comma before καὶ αὐτός rather than before φαῦλος. The argument runs then as follows: “if he was right in driving them out, <right, because they were bad indeed,> then he himself is also a bad man, since he is guilty of the same; but if he is not a bad man himself, etc.” The words εἰ δ’ αὐτὸς οὐ φαῦλος in the second part of the dilemma have the corresponding αὐτὸς φαῦλός ἐστιν in the first part. Thus the argument is completely clear now.<sup>10</sup>

I 8. – In this chapter Origen reproaches Celsus for being insincere: “For from other writings he is found to be an Epicurean. But here because he appears to have more reasonable grounds for criticising Christianity if he does not confess the opinions of

<sup>9</sup> Cited by Chadwick, p. 10, n. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Koetschau makes the same mistake: “Wenn er sie mit Recht ausschliesst, obwohl er ebenfalls derselben Handlungen schuldig ist, so ist er schlecht”. Delarue’s (cf. PG 11, col. 667 A) translation, however, is correct: *illum enim, si juste alios rejectit, improbum esse, cum eorumdem criminum sit reus*.

Epicurus, he pretends that *there is something in man superior to the earthly part, which is related to God, etc.*" (The doctrines summed up here are clearly Platonic.) And [205] Origen concludes his chapter with the observation δύο δὲ παρειλήφαμεν Κέλσους γεγονέναι Ἐπικουρέους, τὸν μὲν πρότερον κατὰ Νέρωνα, τοῦτον δὲ κατὰ Ἀδριανὸν καὶ κατωτέρω. Chadwick translates: "But we have heard that there were two Epicureans called Celsus, the earlier one a contemporary of Nero, while the other lived in Hadrian's time and later". In his Introduction Chadwick quotes this text as evidence for the theory that to Origen "the identity of Celsus was a matter of uncertainty". But he adds that "if our Celsus can be identified with either of these two, he must be identified with the second".<sup>11</sup> If Chadwick had read carefully, he would have seen that Origen himself is quite sure about this identification. Having designated the first Celsus with τὸν μὲν πρότερον, he denotes the second with τοῦτον δέ. This τοῦτον δέ does not mean the same as τὸν δέ, which normally corresponds to τὸν μὲν, as Chadwick seems to believe. It means "this Celsus" or "our Celsus", as was well observed by Delarue whose 18th-century Latin translation reads: *Duos autem accepimus fuisse Celsos Epicureos, alterum qui Nerone Imperatore, hunc vero qui Adriani aetate et postea vixit.*<sup>12</sup>

It is worthwhile to investigate the cause of Chadwick's mistake. An indication is given by Chadwick himself, when, immediately after the words cited he observes: "At any rate, Origen takes his opponent, though with some hesitation, to be an Epicurean". This hesitation with regard to Celsus' "philosophical identity" has, as it seems, misled Chadwick to discover also hesitation in Origen with regard to Celsus' "historical identity". However, in contrast to the undeniable hesitation elsewhere in this work, there is no sign of it in the chapter under discussion. To explain this noteworthy fact a discussion of the much debated question of Celsus' Epicureanism is required.

The texts of Celsus, as cited by Origen, offer no sign of any Epicurean theory. This agrees with the statement of Origen himself that in this book Celsus does not speak his mind. That is why Origen bases his assertion on "other writings". Since an Epicurean

<sup>11</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p. XXIV.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. PG 11, col. 670C. Koetschau's translation is also correct. H. Crouzel (*Origène et la philosophie* [Paris, Aubier, 1962] p. 75) follows the erroneous translation of Chadwick.

Celsus is known from other sources, one who flourished in the later half of the second century, several authors have accepted Origen's assertion in the present chapter. Thus to them Celsus was indeed an Epicurean.<sup>13</sup> However, Origen's own [206] work provides serious objections against this inference. As Chadwick observed, "Origen's references to Celsus' alleged philosophy become more and more hesitant, and cease entirely after the beginning of the fifth book ... Ultimately, Origen recognizes that his opponent is a 'Platonizing' philosopher (IV 83), and notes that Celsus often speaks of Plato in terms of profound respect (VI 47)".<sup>14</sup> Chadwick concludes: "Celsus' philosophy is that of an eclectic Platonist". He explains Origen's apodictic assertion of Celsus' Epicureanism in the present chapter by assuming a prejudice, suggested to him partly by his friend and patron, who sent him the work of Celsus with a request for refutation, partly by the character of the work, which looked like the work of an atheist. He observes, moreover, that "it is a plausible suggestion that, although Origen must have realised that Celsus was a Platonic, he accused him of Epicureanism partly to discredit him in the eyes of his readers. As Dr. W.R. Inge has observed, 'Epicurean' was then a term of abuse like Fascist or Bolshevik".<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, all this seems plausible, but it still does not explain the discrepancy between this apodictic assertion and the later hesitance. The solution is to be found in the manner in which Origen composed this work. In the sixth chapter of the *prooimium*, which he wrote after finishing the first part (ch. 1-27) of the first book,<sup>16</sup> he says: "At first I contemplated making notes on the main points and giving brief answers to them, and then putting the work into definite shape. But afterwards the material itself suggested to me that I would save time if I were to be content with the points which I had answered in this way at the beginning, and in what followed to combat in detail Celsus' charges against us to the best of our ability". Now it is not difficult to see how, as long as the first method of treating the subject-matter was followed, Origen's prejudices could predominate, whereas in discussing the details of

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<sup>13</sup> See Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. XXIV ss.; also C. Andresen, *Logos und Nomos. Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (Berlin, 1955) p. 3 ss.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. XXVI.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> See the first sentence of *prooim.* ch. 6.

the text itself, the author was compelled by the very text to shape and readjust his assertions. This explains sufficiently the total absence of hesitation in the present chapter with regard to both the philosophical and historical identity of Celsus. It is only for the reader's information that Origen at the end of the chapter notices that of the two Epicureans Celsus, his opponent was the later one.

Thus there is no need for assuming with Chadwick that Origen, [207] although he realised that Celsus was a Platonist, accused him of Epicureanism. In the beginning Origen was seriously convinced of the truth of his assertion. Later on he became hesitant. That at this stage he did not mitigate his earlier assertion is easily explained by the well-known fact that Origen worked at a quick pace, dictating his text without giving himself time for revision.

I 10–11. In these two chapters Origen defends the Christians against the accusation, repeatedly uttered by the Greek thinkers, that their conviction rested upon faith (πίστις) rather than on the one solid foundation, which is reason and rational argument (λόγος and ἀπόδειξις).<sup>17</sup> Chadwick's genius seems to have abandoned him, when he translated these chapters. The coherence of the text is seriously harmed here. In order to give a clear idea of the way in which Origen treats this highly important subject, the whole passage must be discussed.

Origen begins as follows: "As this matter of faith is so much talked of,<sup>18</sup> I have to reply that we accept it as useful for the multitude, and that we admittedly teach those who cannot abandon everything and pursue a study of rational argument to believe without thinking out their reasons. But, even if they do not admit it, in practice others do the same".

This observation is called forth by a passage in the work of Celsus cited in the preceding ch. 9. Celsus remarks there that some (τινῶς) Christians "*do not even want to give or to receive a reason for*

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<sup>17</sup> A striking illustration of this Greek attitude is given by R. Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (London, 1949) especially in the chapter *Faith and Reason*, p. 48 ss. In addition to the texts of Galen the author discusses most interesting passages from Lucian's *Hermotimus*, and from the introductory chapter of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, the latter of which is probably an answer to Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. See also the remarkable book by E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge, University Press, 1965) ch. IV: "The Dialogue of Paganism with Christianity".

<sup>18</sup> Εἴτ' ἐπεὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς πίστεως θρυλοῦσι, ...

what they believe, and use such expressions as 'Do not ask questions; just believe', and 'Thy faith will save thee'. Clearly he had certain Christian, perhaps sectarian, groups in mind who reacted against the Greek adagium "no πίστις, only απόδειξις" with "no απόδειξις, only πίστις". The same groups are pointed out by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* I 9 (43.1): "Ἐνιοὶ δὲ εὐφρεῖς οἰόμενοι εἶναι ἀξιούσι μήτε φιλοσοφίας ἄπτεσθαι μήτε διαλεκτικῆς, ἀλλὰ μήδε τὴν φυσικὴν θεωρίαν ἐκμανθάνειν, μόνην δὲ καὶ ψιλὴν τὴν πίστιν ἀπαιτοῦσι, ὥσπερ εἰ μηδεμίαν ἡξίουσαν ἐπιμέλειαν ποιησάμενοι τῆς ἀμπέλου εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοὺς βότρυας λαμβάνειν. [208] Clement and Origen had another opinion. They consider the simple faith (ψιλὴ πίστις) as useful<sup>19</sup> and, therefore, good for the multitude, "who cannot abandon everything and pursue a study of rational argument".<sup>20</sup> For those however who are able to abandon everything a faith with reason and wisdom is far better than a simple faith.<sup>21</sup>

From the plural θρυλοῦσι<sup>22</sup> it is, however, also clear that Celsus' words were no more than an occasion to the present observation. Actually Origen is fighting the general attack the Greeks made on the Christian faith. He defends Christian πίστις by stating that his opponents, even without admitting it, in practice are doing the same. The two chapters 10–11 are entirely an argument in support of this contention. It is, in fact, a double argument, which can be summed up in the following way:

1) *In our way of thinking* we are ultimately guided by some faith in some one, either a philosopher or a philosophical school. Is it then not more reasonable to believe in God, who is above all, and in Him who taught mankind about Him?

2) *In our actions* we ultimately rest upon some faith in either human beings or human things. Is it not more reasonable to believe in God, the creator of all, and in Him who reveals Him to us?

Apparently nobody has as yet discovered the structure of this double argument.

<sup>19</sup> This was the special subject-matter of ch. 9.

<sup>20</sup> The words πάντα καταλιπεῖν καὶ ἀκολουθεῖν ἐξετάσει λόγου remind one of the words of St. Peter in the Gospel "we have left all things and have followed thee" (ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι, Mt. 19,27; cf. Mk. 10,28; Luke 18,28). One should not forget that Christ is the Logos.

<sup>21</sup> C.C. I, 13 πολλὰ διαφέρει μετὰ λόγου καὶ σοφίας συγκατατίθεσθαι τοῖς δόγμασι ἢ περ μετὰ ψιλῆς τῆς πίστεως. As to Clement of Alexandria, see W. Völker, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1952) pp. 220–254; p. 380.

<sup>22</sup> See n. 18.

The actual text runs as follows: τίς γὰρ προτραπείς ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ ἀποκληρωτικῶς ἐπὶ τινὰ αἵρεσιν ἑαυτὸν φιλοσόφων ρίψας ἢ τῷ εὐπορηκέναι τοιοῦδε διδασκάλου ἄλλως ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἔρχεται ἢ τῷ πιστεύειν τὴν αἵρεσιν ἐκείνην κρείττονα εἶναι; Reading this one is at first sight inclined to accept ἢ (τῷ εὐπορηκέναι) and ἢ (τῷ πιστεύειν) as being two disjunctives. Chadwick, following this first impression, translates: "What man who is urged to study philosophy and throws himself at random into some school of philosophers, comes to do so for any reason except either that he has come across a particular teacher or that he believes some one school to be better than the rest?" For this [209] translation he had to force the text by removing the words ἄλλως ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἔρχεται from their place and to put them before the first ἢ. This is unacceptable. Moreover, it completely destroys the structure of Origen's argument. In fact, the two particles ἢ are not two disjunctives and do, therefore, not have the same function; the first ἢ is a disjunction between ἀποκληρωτικῶς and τῷ εὐπορηκέναι, the second corresponds to ἄλλως. Hence one should translate: "What man who is urged to study philosophy and throws himself into some school of philosophers, either at random or because he has come across a philosopher of that school (τοιοῦδε), comes to do so for any reason except that he *believes* that school to be better?"<sup>23</sup> The crux of Origen's argument is that one cannot come to some philosophy except by faith. By taking the two particles ἢ as being two disjunctives Chadwick opens a second possibility alongside faith, thus obviously missing the point of the argument.

Chadwick's translation of the beginning of ch. 11 will once again show that he misunderstood the argumentation. Origen concludes there: Εἴπερ οὖν δεῖ πιστεύειν, ὥς ὁ λόγος ἐδίδαξεν, ... This means: "If it is then necessary to *believe*, as my argument has shown", while Chadwick translates: "If therefore, as my argument has shown, we *may* believe".

<sup>23</sup> The translation by Delarue and Koetschau are correct. They run as follows: Delarue: *Nam quis ad philosophiae studium incitatus et in aliquam philosophorum sectam aut sorte aut quod in talem magistrum incidit, se conjiciens, aliter ad eam se applicat, quam quia illam credit reliquis praestantior?* (PG 11, col. 674C). Koetschau: "Wer sich nämlich der Philosophie zuwendet und einer bestimmten philosophischen Schule anschliesst, entweder aufs Geratewohl oder weil er einen geeigneten Lehrer dieser Schule gefunden hat, lässt der sich in seinem Verhalten durch etwas anderes bestimmen als durch 'den Glauben' dass jene Schule die bessere sei?" (*op. cit.*, p. 17). The translation given by Crouzel, *op. cit.*, p. 118 is completely wrong.

The remaining part of ch. 10 explains the statement that every adherent of a philosophy begins with believing in that philosophy. For "he does not wait to hear the argument of all the philosophers and of the different schools, and the refutation of one and the proof of another, when in this way he chooses to be a Stoic, or a Platonist, or a Peripatetic, or an Epicurean, or a follower of some such philosophical school". Thus his choice is moved "be an unreasoning impulse" (ἀλόγῳ τινὶ φορῶ). Now it was just the ἀλογον in the belief against which the attack of the Greeks was directed.<sup>24</sup>

In what follows Origen gives some remarkable characterizations of the several philosophical schools. Those who choose the Platonic way of [210] thinking are said to "despise the others as of lesser significance" (ὕπερφρονήσαντες ὡς ταπεινότερων<sup>25</sup> τῶν ἄλλων); Aristotelism is said to be the most human philosophy (ὡς ἀνθρωπικώτατον καὶ μᾶλλον τῶν λοιπῶν αἱρέσεων εὐγνωμόνως ὁμολοθοῦντα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ).

As to those who choose Epicureanism he says: καὶ ἀπὸ πρώτης δὲ προσβολῆς ταραχθέντες τινὲς εἰς τὸν περὶ προνοίας λόγον ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς γινομένων φαύλοις καὶ σπουδαίοις προπετέστερον συγκατέθεντο τῷ μηδαμῶς εἶναι πρόνοιαν καὶ τὸν Ἐπικούρου καὶ Κέλσου εἶλοντο λόγον. Chadwick: "And some, who were alarmed at their first encounter with the argument about providence based on the earthly circumstances of bad and good men, have too hastily concluded that providence does not exist, and have adopted the opinion of Epicurus and Celsus". Chadwick appears to combine εἰς τὸν περὶ προνοίας λόγον with προσβολῆς and ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς γινομένων φαύλοις καὶ σπουδαίοις with λόγον. As a parallel text he cites Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 1,32: "When anyone argues that providence exists from the order of the heavenly bodies, we oppose him with the argument that frequently the good suffer evil while the wicked prosper, and by this reasoning we conclude that providence does not exist". This text ought to have warned Chadwick against his own translation of the text under discussion. The suffering of the good and the prosperity of the wicked has always been an argument *against* providence. Those meant here by Origen were driven to Epicureanism just by this argument. He speaks of those who "as soon as they are faced with (ἀπὸ πρώτης προσβολῆς) the problem of the

<sup>24</sup> See Walzer, *op. cit.*, p. 54: ἀλόγῳ πίσκει καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ συγκαταθέσει; ἀλόγῳ δὲ καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ πίσκει (Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* I 1).

<sup>25</sup> With Chadwick (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 13, n. 2) instead of ταπεινότερον.

suffering of the good and the prosperity of the wicked, get confused with regard to the theory of providence, and too hastily assent to a doctrine according to which providence does not exist and choose the system of Epicurus and Celsus".<sup>26</sup> Delarue's rendering is much better: *Ac nonnulli, ut primum Providentiae mentio facta est, perturbati iis quae hic probis improbisque contingunt, praepropere in hanc abiere sententiam quae Providentiam tollit, Epicuroque et Celso se addixerunt.*<sup>27</sup> He seems, however, to combine ἀπό πρώτης προσβολῆς with εἰς τὸν περὶ προνοίας λόγον. In that case one would have expected πρὸς τὸν ... λόγον. One would prefer understanding [211] ἀπὸ πρώτης προσβολῆς as belonging to ταραχθέντες ἐκ τῶν ἐ.γ.γ.φ.κ.σ. and εἰς (τὸν ... λόγον) as meaning "with regard to"; as was pointed out in the rendering given above.

In the first sentence of ch. 11 Origen draws the conclusion of the foregoing argument, which can be paraphrased as follows: "If therefore, as we have shown, it is necessary<sup>28</sup> to believe in some one founder of a philosophical school (i.e. in a human being), how is it not much more reasonable to believe in the supreme God<sup>29</sup> and in Him who teaches us that we ought to worship Him alone".

Origen adds: "In respect of these matters a man who not only believes, but also uses reason in considering these questions, will declare the proofs that suggest themselves to him which he may discover as the result of an exhaustive inquiry". Obviously Origen aims here at the possibility of founding faith on reasonable arguments (ἀποδείξεις). This can be done by the man who has πίστις μετὰ λόγου, or, as it is said here, ὁ μὴ πιστεύων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγῳ θεωρῶν. The importance of this observation is obvious. Origen points out that the Christian faith fulfils the Greek requirements of rationality.

Origen now begins a new argument. In the foregoing he treated on the human *way of thinking*; now human *action* comes in discussion. If the text of ch. 10–11 must be divided in two parts, the division ought to be made here.

<sup>26</sup> The way in which the name of Celsus is mentioned here seems to confirm the theory that Origen, writing the first part of his book, did not feel any hesitation about the Epicureanism of his opponent. See also I 21 (p. 72, 1–2): τοῦτο γὰρ Κέλσῳ καὶ τοῖς Ἐπικουρείοις δόκει.

<sup>27</sup> PG 11, col. 675A.

<sup>28</sup> See p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ litt. "the God who is above all things". Origen is very fond of this expression. See Andresen, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

The text runs as follows: πῶς δ' οὐκ εὐλογώτερον πάντων τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πίστεως ἡρημένων, ἐκείνων μᾶλλον πιστεύειν τῷ θεῷ; τίς γάρ πλεῖ ἢ γαμεῖ ἢ παιδοποιεῖται ἢ ρίπτει τὰ σπέρματα ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν μὴ τὰ κρείττονα πιστεύων ἀπαντήσεσθαι, δυνατοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἐναντία γενέσθαι καὶ ἔστιν ὅτε γινομένου; Chadwick translates: "Why is it not more reasonable, seeing that all human life depends on faith, to believe in God rather than in them? Who goes on a voyage, or marries, or begets children, or casts seeds into the ground, unless he believes that things will turn out for the better, although it is possible that the opposite may happen—as it sometimes does". From the second sentence it is obvious that Origen is arguing here on human *action*. The transition to this new argument is made in the first sentence, especially by the expression πάντων τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, i.e. "all human things"; these include all human thinking (which depends on faith in human authority), and [212] all human action (which depends on faith in the object of that action). One could ask whether ἐκείνων refers to the philosophers mentioned before, as Chadwick<sup>30</sup> and Koetschau<sup>31</sup> take it, or to τὰ ἀνθρώπινα. In the latter case it would refer to both the human authority and the objects of human action. One should translate: "Why is it not more reasonable, seeing that all human activity depends on faith <in human beings or things>, to believe in God rather than in them?" In this way the argument is much more coherent and therefore stronger. At any rate, the particle γάρ, which Chadwick omits, should be rendered.

Origen concludes: "Now if it is the faith that the future will be better which maintains life in every action where the result is uncertain, πῶς οὐ μᾶλλον αὕτη παραληφθήσεται εὐλόγως τῷ πιστεύοντι ὑπὲρ τὴν πλεομένην θάλασσαν καὶ γῆν σπειρομένην καὶ γυναῖκα γαμουμένην καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις πράγματα τῷ ταῦτα πάντα δημιουργήσαντι θεῷ καὶ τῷ ... τολμήσαντι τοῦτον τὸν λόγον παραστήσαι τοῖς πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης". Chadwick translates: "Why may not this faith be accepted by a believer in God more reasonably than by a man who sails the sea, or sows seed in the earth, or marries a wife, or undertakes any other human activity. For he puts his faith in God who created all these things, and in him who ... ventured to commend this doctrine to people in all parts of the

<sup>30</sup> As appears from the pronoun 'them' in his translation.

<sup>31</sup> "als jenen Philosophen". Delarue evades the difficulty by ignoring the pronoun.

world" (italics by me). I must be patent to anyone that the translation of ὑπὲρ τὴν πλεομένην θάλασσαν, etc., is forced here. Chadwick introduces a comparison between *a believer in God* and *a believer in human beings or things*.<sup>32</sup> Origen, however, wants to argue that he who believes in human things has more reason for believing in God. The objects, not the subjects of faith are compared. His own words are: "how is this faith not more reasonably accepted by *him who believes* (τῷ πιστεύοντι), rather than in the sea which is sailed <by him>, or the earth which is sowed, or the wife which is married and the other human things, *in God who has created all these things* and in Him who ...".

Thus there is a remarkable resemblance between this concluding sentence and that of the first argument, just as there was between the two sentences beginning with τίς γάρ.[213]

As in so many other instances Origen refuted his opponent's accusation by stating that they themselves were doing the same. This method cannot but stress the resemblances between the two standpoints; yet it also obscures the differences. A more balanced insight in Origen's opinion about Christian faith can only be gained from study of his other works. Still, the present discussion remains an interesting chapter in the history of the encounter between Christian belief and Greek thinking.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The same mistake in Koetschau ("dann sind doch mehr als *diejenigen, welche* das Meer befahren, ..., zu diesem Glauben *die andern* berechtigt, die Gott vertrauen") and Delarue (*cur non rationabiliori de causa quam qui vel maria navigant, ... hanc ille fidem assumpserit qui Deo ... credit*).

<sup>33</sup> Origen's discussion shows in many respects similarities with the second book of the *Stromateis* by Clement of Alexandria, for instance in the following text. *Strom.* II 8,4 πίστις δὲ ἦν διαβάλλουσι κενὴν καὶ βάρβαρον νομίζοντες Ἑλληνες, πρόληψις ἐκούσιός ἐστι θεοσεβείας συγκατάθεσις. II 14,1 πίστει οὖν ἐφικέσθαι μόνῃ οἷόν τε τῆς τῶν ὅλων ἀρχῆς. II 15,5 κυριώτερον οὖν τῆς ἐπιστήμης ἢ πίστις καὶ ἔστιν αὐτῆς κριτήριον. Cf. Völker, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–254. See on Clement also the new monograph by Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*. Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966) pp. 51 ss.

## ORIGEN'S DEFINITION OF EYXAPIΣTIA IN *DE ORATIONE* 14,2

In 1 Tim. 2,1 saint Paul sums up four kinds of prayer: δέησις, προσευχή, ἔντευξις, εὐχαριστία. Discussing this Pauline text Origen gives a definition of each of these terms. That of εὐχαριστία is difficult to understand and has led the interpreters in several directions, as it appears from their translations. The text runs as follows: εὐχαριστίαν δὲ (ἡγοῦμαι εἶναι) τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ τετευχέναι ἀγαθῶν ἀπὸ θεοῦ μετ' εὐχῶν ἀνθομολόγησιν, ἀντειλημμένου τοῦ ἀνθομολογουμένου τοῦ μεγέθους ἢ τῷ εὐεργετηθέντι μεγέθους φαινομένου τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν γεγενημένης εὐεργεσίας. The difficulty lies, of course, in the participle construction ἀντειλημμένου ... εὐεργεσίας.

O'Meara (Ancient Christian Writers, 19, London 1954) translates: "and thanksgiving is the prayer with acknowledgement to God for favours received from God: *either the one who acknowledges, understands the greatness of the favour done him, or he who has received it attaches such greatness to it.*"

Obviously this interpreter discerns two *genitivi absoluti* separated by the disjunctive ἢ. In the first one τοῦ ἀνθομολογουμένου is subject of ἀντειλημμένου, which has τοῦ μεγέθους (τῆς ... εὐεργεσίας) as its object. To put it into a clause: ὅτε (or ἐπεὶ) ὁ ἀνθομολογούμενος ἀντείληπται τοῦ μεγέθους (τῆς ... εὐεργεσίας). This makes a very good sense: "when (or because) he who acknowledges has understood the greatness of the favour." But does the second genitive absolute fit in with this interpretation? Here μεγέθους would be the *subject* of φαινομένου, or to put it into a clause again ἢ μέγεθος φαίνεται τῷ εὐεργετηθέντι. One would at least expect an article before μεγέθους, but even then the construction is awkward, I would dare to say impossible. It opposes, moreover, two things which are not really opposites of each other "either he *understands* the greatness of the favour ... or he *attaches* such greatness to it".

Koetschau (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, München 1926) translates: "endlich 'Danksagung' (εὐχαριστία) die mit Gebet verbundene [140] Bestätigung des Empfängers, dass er Güter von Gott erhalten hat, *indem der Empfänger die Grösse der ihm gewordenen Wohltat erfasst, oder diese dem Beschenkten als gross erscheint*". This translation is based on the same analysis of the text as that of O'Meara.

Jay (*Origen's Treatise on Prayer*, London 1954) explains the construction as follows: "Ἀνθομολογουμένου is here passive in meaning; τοῦ ἀνθομολογουμένου τοῦ μεγέθους is the subject of ἀντειλημμένου, with which is understood 'by God'. The genitive τῆς ... εὐεργεσίας depends on the first τοῦ μεγέθους, the clause ἢ τῷ ... φαινόμενον being parenthetical" (note 5, p. 122-123). His translation runs as follows; "and 'giving thanks' is an acknowledgement with prayer upon receiving good things from God, *when the acknowledgement of the greatness, or what seems greatness in the eyes of him who has received it, of the kindness conferred upon him is received by God in exchange.*" In my opinion Jay has seen quite well that ἢ is not a disjunction between two *genitivi absoluti*, but between μεγέθους and μεγέθους φαινόμενον, i.e. (real) greatness and what seems greatness; the article before the first μεγέθους 'embraces' also the second.

But for the rest Jay's interpretation seems to be unacceptable. Τὸ ἀνθομολογούμενον τὸ μέγεθος, which would be the subject of ἀντειλημμένου, cannot be taken together (in the sense of "the acknowledged greatness"). This is against the Greek idiom. Moreover, Jay has to add a "by God" to his translation of ἀντειλημμένου, which hardly could have been omitted by Origen, if he had meant to say this.

And if those objections are not a convincing argument against Jay's interpretation, the translation itself may perhaps persuade the reader. How could the clause "when the acknowledgement of the greatness ... is received by God in exchange" belong to a definition of thanksgiving?

All those difficulties disappear, if one takes τοῦ μεγέθους as the *subject* of ἀντειλημμένου and τοῦ ἀνθομολογουμένου as its *object*. Or to put it into a clause once more: ὅτε τὸ μέγεθος ἢ ... μέγεθος φαινόμενον τῆς ... εὐεργεσίας ἀντείληπται τοῦ ἀνθομολογουμένου. What Origen intends is that thanksgiving takes place "when (or because) *the greatness, or what seems greatness in the eyes of him who has received it, of the favour done to him, has taken hold of (has struck) the one who acknowledges*". Everyone's experience testifies that the element of "being struck by the greatness of a favour" does belong, indeed, to the definition of giving thanks.

## ON THE DATE OF ATHANASIUS' APOLOGETICAL TREATISES

In which period of his life did Athanasius (295–373) write his two apologetical treatises, *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi*? These two works, which, as appears from the first chapter of *De Inc.*, belong together, have been dated in the early period of his life, in the middle period and in his later years. The history of this dating problem was written by Ch. Kannengiesser, who delivered an interesting contribution to it himself.<sup>1</sup>

The apologies were dated in the early period (about 318) by the Maurist Monk, Bernard de Montfaucon, in the *Monitum* to his edition of Athanasius' work (1698).<sup>2</sup> His only argument was the absence of any trace of the Arian controversy in the treatises. According to Montfaucon they must therefore have been written before that controversy arose. This opinion has been followed by most scholars, among whom is the recent commentator of the treatises, Dr. Meijering.<sup>3</sup> He adduces a second argument for this thesis, namely the intellectual and rather cool tone of the two works. This points to a private theological exercise, written by a young man after finishing his studies (p. 108).

The first scholar who opposed to this early date was S. Le Nain de Tillemont in 1702. His main argument was a remark in the introduction of *Contra Gentes*, "we do not have the writings of our teachers at hand now". From this remark he draws the conclusion that the treatise must have been written by Athanasius when he was in exile, possibly during his exile at Trier (335–337). Tillemont's opinion is followed by Kannengiesser, who has tried to give it a much larger substruction. On the one [292] hand, he argues, even in 318 the Arian conflict was already going on, so that Montfaucon's argument for dating the treatises in that time does not seem to be valid. On the other hand he draws attention to a

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. Kannengiesser, S.J., La date de l'Apologie d'Athanase *Contre les Païens* et *Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe*, *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 58 (1970) 383–428.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, PG 25, 1.

<sup>3</sup> E.P. Meijering, *Orthodoxy and Platonism in Athanasius. Synthesis or Antithesis?* (Leiden, Brill, 1974; reprint with corrections of the 1968 edition). See the review in *Vig. Chr.* 29 (1975), 316–320.

literary resemblance between a text in *De Inc.* and the *Festal Letters*, written by Athanasius annually from 328, in order to communicate to his suffragan bishops the exact date of the beginning of Lent. In *De Inc.* 40 Athanasius speaks about the heretics as "those who wish to divide the church" (τοῖς βουλομένοις διαιρεῖν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν). As Kannengiesser observes in an earlier article devoted to this question,<sup>4</sup> in itself this expression does not point to a special heresy, the Arians. But curiously one finds a similar way of speaking in several years of the *Festal Letters*, and there Athanasius has obviously the Arians in mind. Kannengiesser, moreover, noticed a difference between the *Letters* before and after 337, i.e., the year in which Constantine died. While after 337 Athanasius mentions Arius and the Arians by name, he indicates them only in veiled terms before that time. According to Kannengiesser, this had a political reason. Athanasius, who was in exile, would not bring his bishop's see in danger by attacking the Arians too openly. The absence of traces of the Arian conflict in the apologetical treatises must have the same reason. Moreover, Athanasius could the more easily set aside the conflict there, since an apologetic work did not require taking up a position vis à vis the political and religious problems of the moment. This complex of indications, together with Tillemont's argument, point to a dating of these treatises in about 336. As Kannengiesser says, probability is the most you can hope to attain on this question.

In 1961 Henric Nordberg published *An attempt at Redating the treatises under discussion*.<sup>5</sup> According to him, they must have been written during the years of the government of Julian (361–363). For his arguments and their refutation I refer to Kannengiesser's second article.<sup>6</sup>

Reading the history of this dating problem one may get the impression that this is an insoluble question. Every indication in the text seems to be ambiguous. Montfaucon was certainly right in stating that one finds [293] no clear trace of the Arian conflict in the treatises. But an argument *e silentio* is not convincing, unless one

<sup>4</sup> Le témoignage des *Lettres Festales* de saint Athanase sur la date de l'Apologie Contre les Païens, Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe, *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 52 (1964) 91–100.

<sup>5</sup> H. Nordberg, *Athanasius' Tractates Contra Gentes and De Incarnatione. An Attempt at redating*, Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, SSVIII, 3 (Helsinki 1961).

<sup>6</sup> *Rech.Sc.Rel.* 58 (1970) 387ff.

proves that the author did not set aside the problem purposely. Montfaucon himself has faced this problem. He states that even if Athanasius intended to suppress the name of Arius, some traces of the beginning conflict would have been visible through the text (cf. *Montium*, PG 25,1). But evidently he did not convince all scholars, for some of them retorted that, indeed, Athanasius had good reason to suppress the name of Arius and that there *are* some vague traces of the Arian conflict in the text. The problem seems to be insoluble.

However, until now one piece of evidence, appearing in both texts, has not been noticed. This is the evidence which, in my opinion, enables us to make a decisive conclusion. It is contained in the manner in which Athanasius speaks about the heretics.

The two passages run as follows: in *Contra Gentes* 6 Athanasius, after having mentioned that some of the *Hellenes* have taught that evil has an existence of itself and having showed that this leads to impossible conclusions, continues as follows: Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν αἱρέσεων, ἐκπεσόντες τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς διδασκαλίας, καὶ περὶ τὴν πίστιν ναυαγήσαντες, καὶ οὗτοι μὲν ὑπόστασιν τοῦ κακοῦ παραφρονοῦσιν εἶναι· ἀναπλάττονται δὲ ἑαυτοῖς παρὰ τὸν ἀληθινὸν τοῦ Πατέρα θεὸν ἕτερον, καὶ τοῦτον ἀγέννητον τοῦ κακοῦ ποιητὴν καὶ τῆς κακίας ἀρχηγόν, τὸν καὶ τῆς κτίσεως δημιουργόν (PG 25,13A). *De Incarnatione* 2 presents a similar picture. There Athanasius discusses the creation of the world. He mentions two opinions of Greek philosophers: the one is that of the Epicureans, who assert that all things come to existence in a fortuitous way (αὐτομάτως καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε), the other is that of Plato who teaches that God created the world out of pre-existent matter. Having showed that both opinions lead to impossible conclusions, he continues: Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν αἱρέσεων ἄλλον ἑαυτοῖς ἀναπλάττονται δημιουργόν τῶν πάντων παρὰ τὸν Πατέρα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (PG 25, 100C).

No scholar who studied the present problem seems to have paid attention to this manner of expression. But, in my opinion, the formula οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν αἱρέσεων is decisive here. If at that time Athanasius had in mind another group of heretics, he could not speak about 'the heretics'. Montfaucon wrongly paraphrases: *plerosque haereticorum* (PG 25, CLXI, *Animadversio* III), Kannengiesser speaks about *les "hérétiques"* (*art. cit.*, 420) instead of "*les hérétiques*"; but in fact οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν αἱρέσεων is all embracing. And if it is possible to prove that here Athanasius cannot have meant the Arians, our conclusion must be that in the period of the [294] composition of the

apologetic treatises Athanasius when speaking about 'heretics' did not have in mind the Arians.

Now from the contents of the two passages it is evident that the Arians are not meant here. In his edition of *De Incarnatione* (Sources Chrétiennes, 199) Kannengiesser begins his translation of the relevant passage with the words "*Les hérétiques ...*", but says in a note: "Il s'agit d'une opinion courante des Gnostiques, dénoncée ici plus spécialement chez Marcion. Depuis Irénée, on avait pris le coutume de voir dans ces courants religieux des 'hérésies chrétiennes'." I would prefer to say that Athanasius denounces the dualistic doctrine of creation, to be found according to him *in all heresies* of that time. At any rate, *Arianism is certainly not meant*, neither here, nor in the passage from *Contra Gentes*.

Our conclusion must be that in the time in which Athanasius wrote his apologetical treatises he did not think of Arianism as an heresy. This, of course, does not mean that at that time no discussion was going on between Arius and the Alexandrian ecclesiastical leaders (see Kannengiesser, second article, 403ff.), but there was no formal Arian heresy as yet.

If this conclusion is correct, the two treatises must have been written in an early period of Athanasius' life. The texts adduced by the defenders of a later date should be explained in the light of this fact. On the whole this will not cause much difficulty, since the texts admit various interpretations.

As to the text of *Contra Gentes* 1 ("We do not have at hand the writings of our teachers now"), already used by Tillemont as an argument for a later date, one more comment may be useful. Meijering observes that Athanasius' being exile is not the only possible explanation of this text, but he concludes that we simply cannot explain the fact that Athanasius had no books at hand when he was writing the apologetical treatises (p. 112). Of course, Meijering is correct in stating that an exile is not the only possible explanation, but perhaps an analysis of the context of the statement under discussion enables us to come to a somewhat less negative conclusion.

The way in which several authors quote the words of Athanasius is misleading. Athanasius, they say, writes in *Contra Gentes* 1 τὰς τῶν διδασκάλων συντάξεις ἐν χερσὶ νῦν οὐκ ἔχομεν. The reader gets the impression, that Athanasius is complaining that while writing his apology he does not have to hand the writings of his

teachers. But there is no trace of any discomfort (cf. Meijering, p. 112: "Nothing points towards any emotional discomfort"). In fact the absence of the works of his [295] teachers is *the reason* for Athanasius' writing of the treatise! The statement under discussion appears in an introduction, in which Athanasius, in a typically rhetorical way, argues as follows: In point of fact there is no need for writing this book. The Holy Scriptures are there to teach you; and, moreover, there are the many writings of our holy teachers. If one reads them, one will find all one needs. And then Athanasius continues: "But *because* we do not have the writings of our teachers at hand now, it is necessary for us to write you what we learned from them." Considering this argument one wonders who are the 'we' in this sentence. Is it Athanasius himself? But how could the lack of books at his side be a reason for writing a treatise? One would expect the opposite. The 'we' of his statement must at least include those to whom the treatise is addressed as well. In other words, Athanasius intends to say "Because we (i.e., you and I) do not have the work at hand now," etc. One could even follow Stegmann<sup>7</sup> saying that those to whom the treatise is addressed are meant only ("Indes darf man mit Grund annehmen, dass Athanasius mit der zitierten Äusserung sich kommunikativ in die Lage des Adressaten dachte"). However that may be, this statement does not afford any argument for a later date of Athanasius' apologetical treatises but only points out the scarcity of books at that time.

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<sup>7</sup> *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter: Athanasius*, II (Kempten-München 1917) 5.

GRÉGOIRE DE NYSSE, *DE ANIMA ET RESURRECTIONE*,  
P.G. 46,17A

Dans sa tristesse à cause de la mort de son frère Basile, Grégoire est venu visiter sa soeur âgée, Macrine. Ils parlent sur le problème de l'âme. À l'occasion de certaines déclarations de Grégoire sur la mort, Macrine dit: "Vous ne révoquez pas en doute la vie de l'âme après la mort, au moins?" Grégoire répond, comme il dit lui-même à cause d'une confusion, d'une manière assez violente: εἶπον γὰρ ἐπιτάγμασιν εἰκέναι τὰς θείας φωνάς, δι' ὧν τὸ μὲν δεῖν πεπεισθαι τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς αἰὲ διαμένειν ἀναγκαζόμεθα, οὐ μὴν λόγῳ τινὶ τῷ τοιούτῳ προσήχθημεν δόγματι. ἀλλ' εἰκεν ἡμῖν δουλικῶς ἔνδοθεν ὁ νοῦς φόβῳ τὸ κελευόμενον δέχεσθαι, οὐχ ἑκουσίᾳ τινὶ ὁρμῇ τοῖς λεγομένοις συντίθεσθαι. La signification générale de ces mots est évidente. "Je disais que les mots divins (c'est-à-dire les mots de la Sainte Ecriture) ont l'air de commandements, par lesquels nous sommes forcés à croire que la vie de l'âme est permanente, mais nous ne sommes menés à une telle doctrine par aucun argument." Et alors la même chose est dite encore une fois, maintenant du point de vue de l'esprit humain. "Mais notre esprit en nous paraît prendre le commandement comme un esclave, par crainte, et non pas consentir à ce qui est dit de libre arbitre."

La difficulté dans ce passage est le verbe δεῖν. Dans une phrase avec ἀναγκαζόμεθα comme verbe principal, le verbe δεῖν semble superflu. D'autre part il y a quelque chose qui manque dans la première de ces deux phrases parallèles: Comme les mots οὐ λόγῳ τινὶ correspondent à οὐχ ἑκουσίᾳ τινὶ ὁρμῇ, on cherche dans la première phrase un mot correspondant à φόβῳ. Et alors la solution s'impose: δεῖν est une corruption de δέει.

A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN GREGORY OF NYSSA,  
*APOLOGIA IN HEXAEMERON*, CH. 69

In ch. 69 (numeration of the critical edition by G.H. Forbes, Burntisland, 1855) of his *Apologia in Hexaemeron* Gregory explains how through an inner force, laid down by God in nature, the heavenly bodies took their own places. This holds, he says, of the milky way and the zodiac and, within the latter, of the shape of every ἄστρον, i.e. every constellation in the zodiac. And then speaking of the individual stars in the constellations (also called ἄστρα), he continues: (ὥστε) καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄστρῳ πάλιν, μὴ κατὰ τὸ αὐτόματον ἕκαστον τῶν ἐν τῷ σχήματι κειμένων ἀστρον ἢ ὧδε ἢ ὦδε τὴν θέσιν ἔχειν, ἀλλ' ἰσομερῶς ἢ φυσικῶς ἐγκειμένη αὐτῷ ιδιότης ἀπήγαγεν ἐκεῖ μένειν ἐν ἀμεταθέτῳ τῇ παγιότητι, τῇ τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως δυνάμει κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πεποιηκότος σοφίαν περικρατούμενον (ed. Forbes, p. 84 = Migne, PG 44,117A).

There must be something wrong in this text between ἀλλ' and ἀπήγαγεν, because in an infinitive construction a *verbum finitum* can not but turn up in a subordinate clause. But there is no conjunction or relative here. Moreover the words ἐκεῖ μένειν ἐν ἀ.τ.π. are senseless without a previous indication of *the place where* they remain. And, in addition, the adverb ἰσομερῶς, which means "equally divided" or "of equal length", does not fit in here.

These problems are solved if one considers ἰσομερῶς as a *mistaken writing* of εἰς ὃ μέρος = "into which part" or "into which place", viz. of the constellation. Thanks to the iotacisme the two sound almost the same. Gregory states, then, that every star of a constellation did not get its place fortuitously, but *at the place into which* it has been led by its innate character, *there* it remains in invariable stability, mastered by the force of its own nature in accordance with the wisdom of the Creator.

A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN GREGORY OF NYSSA'S  
*IN SANCTUM PASCHA* (GNO IX, 254.8)

In *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. IX p. 253.19–254.9 Gregory gives in a short survey his view on God's dealing with man in the course of history. God created man as a being of the highest dignity and made him king of his creation. This election would have been in vain, if God had made man mortal. Such an opinion would make God like children, who build sandcastles and destroy them again, playing without any sense of permanence.

In fact, Gregory says, we have learnt quite the opposite. God created the first man immortal. But when transgression and sin arose, God took away man's immortality. Yet this was not the end, for God redeemed man. According to the GNO text, edited by E. Gebhardt, Gregory describes this act of God as follows: εἶτα ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ἀγαθότητος ὑπερβλύζουσα τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἔργον ἐπικλασθεῖσα τῶν ἰδίων χειρῶν σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη κατεκόσμησεν οὓς εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν [ἡμᾶς] εὐδόκησεν ἀνακαινίσαι κατὰστασιν. Gebhardt wrote οὓς instead of the ὅς of all manuscripts but one (S) and had in consequence to delete ἡμᾶς. (For the reading of S, see below.)

Gebhardt was correct in rejecting the reading ὅς because 1) this relative pronoun cannot but refer to the subject of the sentence, *viz.*, ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ἀγαθότητος; this change of gender would be extremely harsh, particularly after the two feminine participles, and 2) the verb κατεκόσμησεν would not have an object.

The reading οὓς, it is true, does away with these syntactic difficulties. But now the question arises: how does one explain the actual reading of the manuscripts? One has to assume that the, from the view-point of construction, rather simple οὓς was corrupted to the difficult ὅς, which moreover forced the scribe to add an object, ἡμᾶς. (One should notice that, if a scribe had *added* an object, he would more likely have chosen αὐτό, referring to τὸ ἔργον, or αὐτόν, referring to ὁ πρωτόπλαστος.).

But Gebhardt seems not to have noticed that with both readings, ὅς and [261] οὓς, one gets in serious trouble. For what does Gregory say about redemption according to both readings? "The source of goodness, abounding in love and moved to pity towards the work of his hands, *adorned with wisdom and knowledge* those whom he ..."

(if one reads ὅς the sentence becomes very awkward, as was said above). In other words, God's act of redemption is characterized as 'an adornment with wisdom and knowledge', which cannot be correct. In fact, this is a characterization of the act of creation, not of redemption. Gregory's words in this very passage may suffice to argue this; speaking about God creating man's dignity he says: τοιοῦτον ἀπαρτίσας σοφὸν καὶ θεοειδῆ καὶ πολλῇ κατακοσμήσας τῇ χάριτι (p. 253, 22–23).

When I had come to this point in my deliberations my colleague, Dr. van Heck, drew my attention to the reading of manuscript S, which puts the relative pronoun ὃ before σοφία and omits the pronoun after κατεκόσμησεν. In this reading Gregory's description of the redemption runs as follows: "then the source of goodness, abounding in love and moved to pity towards the work of his own hands, that he had adorned with wisdom and knowledge, benevolently renewed us into our primordial state". The relative ὃ refers to τὸ ἔργον.

This reading solves all our problems:

- 1) the 'adornment with wisdom and knowledge' no longer refers to the redemption but to the creation. It underlines the primordial dignity of man, as it was stated in the former part of the paragraph.
- 2) The verb ἐστέρησεν is now contrasted with εὐδόκησεν ἀνακαινίσαι, which makes the right balance.
- 3) ἡμῶς is retained.

One should, moreover, notice that the description of God's creative act as an adornment with wisdom and knowledge was not Gregory's own invention, but is almost a quotation of Exodus 36,1 ᾧ ἐδόθη σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη: see also Ex. 31,3 and 35, 31, all about Bezalel. (On several other places one finds the pair ἐπιστήμη καὶ σύνεσις. See the *Concordance* by Hatch and Redpath.) The language of Gregory is strongly biblical in this passage. The characterization of man as "the work of God's hands" is found in Ps. 137, 8, Isa. 64, 8 and Job 14, 15. All this confirms the thesis that the words σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη can only refer to the creation, and this is only achieved if one accepts the reading of S.

On the other hand, the characterization of God's *redemptive* act as a bringing back of man to his primordial state (εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν κατάστασιν) is a typical formula of Gregory. See p.ex. in the same sermon, [262] p. 256, 17–18 οἶδεν (sc. ὁ θεός) ὅπως τὸ ἴδιον ἔργον

διάλυσιν ὑπομεῖναν συναρμόσει πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν κατάστασιν, and *Or. Cat.* c. 15 πρὸς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἄγει κατάστασιν (p. 64, 8–9 Srawley).

Two questions still remain: How to explain the reading of all the other manuscripts? How to explain the presence of the right reading in S?

It is evident that in a very early stage of the tradition a corruption has come into the text. This may have been either an omission of the neuter pronoun (in consequence of which a masculine pronoun was inserted on another place, possibly via a gloss in the margin), or a transposition and change of the pronoun deliberately made by that early scribe, because he did not understand the neuter.

The scribe of S has found again the correct reading. He may have achieved this on the basis of a gloss in the manuscripts he used, or it was his own conjecture. In fact this is not the only time that the scribe of S, by one of those two ways, saved for us the correct reading, as it appears from Jaeger's Preface to *De instituto Christiano* GNO VIII, I. Not without reason Jaeger (*l.c.*, p.7) qualified him as a *vir doctus Byzantinus*.

## A CHRISTIAN *PHAEDO*

### *Two scenes\**

The scene which Plato describes in the *Phaedo* is familiar. Socrates is in prison, surrounded by his friends. He has just been unchained, not because he is about to be freed—at least not in the ordinary sense—but because on this particular day he is to drain the poisoned cup. His friends are terribly upset, because they must say farewell to such a dear teacher and friend. Socrates, however, is totally calm and faces his death with great confidence. His friends are astonished and ask him to explain this attitude. Socrates is prepared to do what he refused to do for his judges: justify himself and explain his attitude to death (63e). In the ensuing dialogue the friends express the conventional view of death as the greatest catastrophe which can happen to man (68d5-6). The tenor of Socrates' argument is already suggested by the subtitle of the dialogue: Περὶ ψυχῆς, i.e. on the soul, the part of man which is not affected by death. I will briefly summarize the argument later.

First I would like describe another scene, in a desolate area of Pontus in Asia Minor. A solitary convent is found there. The date is nearly as many years after Christ as the first scene was before Christ, i.e. 380 A.D. This convent houses another person who is at death's door, a woman called Macrina, founder of the community of women living there. She is lying on her deathbed—if it can be called a bed at all, for it is no more than a plank under her body and a sloping wooden support for her head. She has just been visited by one her brothers, Gregory, bishop of a small town in Cappadocia, south of Pontus. Gregory has come to share with her his sorrow at the recent death of their brother, Basil, who is called 'the Great' and who was bishop of Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia.

This sick woman, who has withdrawn into solitude with her mother, is one of the great women from the early Christian era, a member of a family we know a great deal about, mainly through a

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\* This article was delivered as a valedictory lecture to the Department of Greek and Latin language and literature at Leiden University on September 14th 1987.

biography written by the brother who is visiting her.<sup>1</sup> For the two brothers, Basil and Gregory she was a Christian Socrates.

As I said, the reason why Gregory pays a visit to his sister is sorrow at the death of his brother. But the sight of his mortally ill sister does not at all diminish his grief. On the contrary, seeing his sister intensifies the pain. She, however, is very quiet and tries to calm him down—just as Socrates did with his friends. She repeatedly quotes the words of the Apostle Paul that one should not mourn those who have died as people do who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). Gregory reacts very emotionally and asks: 'How is that possible? If you see what happens in death, how can you not be profoundly sad?'

This leads to a dialogue on the same subject as the *Phaedo*. Macrina plays the role filled by Socrates, while Gregory voices the opposite view. The title of the dialogue is: Περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ἀνάστασεως,<sup>2</sup> of which the first part corresponds to the subtitle of the *Phaedo*, while the second 'on resurrection' contains a new element alien to Platonism but very familiar to Christianity.

Obviously, the similarity in entourage already warrants the description of Gregory's dialogue as a Christian *Phaedo*: two deathbed scenes—the bed on which Socrates is sitting will become his 'deathbed' that same day—and a discussion on the soul. The parallel is clear. But the name is even more justified if we look at the content of the dialogues. What I propose to do in the following is to show the similarities (and the difference) between the two. First, I will briefly outline the substance of Plato's dialogue, then I will consider Gregory's dialogue. Between these two sections I will make some remarks about the time between the two dialogues, specifically about Plato's further development, and—very briefly—about the course of Platonism into Gregory's time.

### *Plato's Phaedo*

Socrates starts his argument in which he explains his cheerful attitude to the approach of death with the following consideration: 'Is it not the case that the true philosopher directs his entire life

<sup>1</sup> There is a critical text of this biography with a French translation and notes in *Sources Chrétiennes* (no. 176) by Pierre Maraval, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek text can be found in J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 46, cols. 12-160. I refer in the text to the columns of this edition.

towards dying? For he does not desire the enjoyment of food and drink and also not sexual pleasure, i.e. the things of the body, but rather he desires the things of the soul, i.e. wisdom and insight (φρόνησις). This means that he is permanently occupied with the separation of the soul from the body, and that is exactly what takes place in death. If this is so and the philosopher is continually occupied with the process of dying, would it not be absurd if, at the moment that the separation of soul and body is going to take place, he should suddenly shrink back? For this reason I am of good cheer, fully confident that a good experience awaits me (64a ff., paraphrase).'

This introductory discussion calls for two remarks. First, the origin of the idea which Socrates develops here is Orphic-Pythagorean: the goal of human life is κάθαρσις, purification from the taint of matter. Second, such a view of philosophy makes it easy to understand why the Christian ascetics were called 'philosophers' and their way of life was characterized as 'philosophy'. But we have still not penetrated to the heart of Plato's philosophical argument.

After giving the above explanation, Socrates asks the somewhat surprising question: 'do we say that the just is something or nothing? .... And that the beautiful and the good is something?' (65d4-7). The reader wonders for a moment where Socrates is heading. But this soon becomes clear. He wants to demonstrate that there is a reality which we cannot reach with our senses but only with our soul or mind. It is the world which is called the world of Ideas. This is Plato's great discovery, and I would like to say something more about it.

Socrates was forever asking: what *is* justice? what *is* goodness? what *is* holiness? And he was always forced to conclude that the just itself cannot be found in this sublunary world. One can meet a just person, or a good person, but not the just itself. These questions of Socrates about *the true being* of things sparked a reaction in Plato's mind. He considered that if true being is not to be found here, it must be somewhere else. There must be a higher reality, of which things on earth are reflections. They bear a resemblance to this reality, but do not have true *being*.

This spiritual reality<sup>3</sup> is attainable for man by the spiritual reality in him which is called 'soul'. Owing to the soul's affinity

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<sup>3</sup> 'Spiritual' here translates 'geestelijk' in Dutch; compare 'geistlich' in German, i.e. what is νοητός, accessible to the intellect or mind or spirit.

with this spiritual reality, man is capable of knowing it. However, this requires a soul of great purity. It is this purity which the philosopher pursues throughout his life. But it can only be completely achieved in death.

These are the two great ideas which occurred to Plato in connection with Socrates' questions about the true being of things: the world of Ideas and the soul's affinity with these Ideas. Plato puts these ideas in Socrates' mouth in the *Phaedo*. This 'discovery' had an immense influence on his further thinking and on the thinking of all those who were trained in the Platonic mode of philosophizing—and these were not only Platonists.

In the *Phaedo* Plato is entirely preoccupied with and enthused about this vision. He sees, at it were, nothing but the Ideas and the human soul which, in a pure state, is connected with the Ideas: the ψυχὴ αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτήν, the soul by itself. He constantly talks about the 'self' of things (74a11-12, c4-5, d6, e6; 75b5-6, c9; 76d8; 77a4; 78d4, etc.), about the soul's pure understanding (φρόνησις) as the goal of human life (65a9; 66e3; 68a2, 7, etc.), about the soul as the divine in man (80a3, 4, 8), and about the body as an interfering factor. Plato also refers to the mysteries, which he believes express the same ideas in symbols (69c).

#### *Between the Phaedo and the De anima et resurrectione*

Before looking at the other '*Phaedo*', I would like to make two remarks about the period between these two dialogues, a lengthy period of more than seven and a half centuries.

Plato's internal dialogue with himself did not stop after the *Phaedo*. The wave of enthusiasm caused by the discovery of the Ideas was followed by further reflection. Plato realized that the human soul contains other faculties besides that of knowing. He had acknowledged these in the *Phaedo*, but had attributed them to the body.

In the *Republic* he distinguishes three forms (εἶδη) of soul:

- (1) the λογιστικόν, thought
- (2) the ἐπιθυμητικόν, desire
- (3) the θυμοειδές, ... how should this be translated? All kinds of renderings are found: 'principle of high spirit' (Shorey), 'Mut' (Schleiermacher, in Rowolts Klassiker), 'wrath' (De Vogel). In Latin the term *appetitus irascibilis* is often used (cf. 'appétit irascible')

in E. des Places, in *Lexique de Platon* (= *Platon, Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XIV, Les Belles Lettres (1964) 257).

The *epithumetikon*, desire, refers to the internal movement aimed at obtaining something, i.e. the yearning to possess, which is oriented towards the self. The *thumoeides* is a movement resulting from dissatisfaction with something or somebody else; it is oriented towards the other. A striking example is wrath, but it is not confined to this emotion. Perhaps 'the wrathful' is a good term: everything which is wrath or resembles it. (I once proposed<sup>4</sup> the translation 'fieriness' or 'the fiery', but the problem with this is that it seems to include the *epithumetikon*. After all, one talks about 'burning' desire. The same objection applies to the word 'urge'.)

So the *Republic* (439d4ff.) distinguishes three forms of soul: *logistikon*, *epithumetikon*, and *thumoeides*. Plato says: the *logistikon* should rule, the *thumoeides* should listen and support the *logistikon*, and together they should guide the *epithumetikon*. So there is no parity between *thumoeides* and *epithumetikon*, which are often mentioned in one breath as 'passions and desires'. The *thumoeides* is the ally of the *logistikon*, thought, in order to suppress desire. Desire is seen as the opposing force.

The *Phaedrus* (246ff.) contains the famous passage in which Plato compares the soul to a charioteer who steers two horses. One strives upwards and is therefore tractable; the second is difficult and unmanageable. In these two horses we can recognize the *thumoeides* (the manageable) and the *epithumetikon* (the difficult), while the charioteer represents the *logistikon*.

These passages in the *Republic* and *Phaedrus* show that Plato has brought the soul closer to the body than in the *Phaedo*, where he focused solely on the 'soul by itself', associated with the Ideas. And the *Timaeus* (34b10ff.) talks about a mixture of the soul (world soul and human soul), which also suggests that the idea of a 'pure', i.e. purely spiritual, soul has been abandoned.

However,—this is my second remark, and it relates to the time after Plato—the view which Plato proclaimed so emphatically in the *Phaedo* remained influential in his school. I would like to cite two testimonies in support of this, one from Plato's immediate environment and one from the *Enneads* by Plotinus, who wanted to breathe new life into Plato's philosophy in the third century A.D.

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<sup>4</sup> See my article in Dutch on Plato's doctrine of the soul, in *Lampas* 1 (1968–9) 306–315 'Plato's zieleleer', espec. 311.

The first text is from *Alcibiades* 1 (probably not by Plato, but certainly from his school). In 130c it is said that man is nothing but his soul. And Socrates goes on to ask in 133c: 'So can we say that there is anything more divine in the soul than that (part) in which knowing and understanding occur?' Alcibiades answers: 'No, we cannot'. 'Then that part of it resembles the divine'.<sup>5</sup> We can note here that the author talks about a 'part' of the soul, much in the way that Plato does in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*. But the part concerned with knowing and thinking is given such an important place ('divine') that we can see the soul of the *Phaedo* shining through it.

The second text is from Plotinus, *Enn.* IV 8. This treatise deals with the soul's descent into material reality. Plotinus starts there by discussing his own experiences. He talks about 'an awakening from the body to itself', which must mean that the 'self' is the soul, and about becoming similar to the divine.<sup>6</sup> The same basic idea is recognized throughout this passage.

We have now seen Plato's view in the *Phaedo*, the development of his thought in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*, and how, despite the continuing influence of the tripartition in these last dialogues, the view of the *Phaedo* is echoed in statements about the knowing soul as the divine in man.

#### *Gregory of Nyssa's De anima et resurrectione*

I now return to Gregory's dialogue with his sister Macrina. Again I will have to confine myself to sketching some of the fundamental principles of this treatise. The emphasis will lie on the ideas which Macrina proclaims about the soul, just as I focused all my attention on Plato's ideas about this matter in the discussion of the *Phaedo*. I therefore passed over the reaction of Socrates' friends, who asked whether perhaps the soul vanishes after death (70a), and whether perhaps the soul is nothing but the harmony (92dff.) between the elements, which is dissolved by death.

The dialogue between Macrina and Gregory proceeds as follows.

<sup>5</sup> Ἔχομεν οὖν εἰπεῖν ὅ τι ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς θειότερον ἢ τοῦτο περὶ ὃ τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν ἐστίν; – οὐχ ἔχομεν. – τῷ θεῷ ἄρα τοῦτ' εἰσὶν αὐτῆς.

<sup>6</sup> πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος ... καὶ τῷ θεῷ εἰς ταῦτόν γεγεννημένος ... (*Enn.* IV,8,1,1).

Macrina: The apostle says that we should not grieve over those who have died, as those do who have no hope. (13A)

Gregory: How is that possible, if you see what happens in death?

Macrina: You should not see that event with the eyes of those who lack reason (ἄλογώτεροι), who are accustomed to look no further than the senses reach (ἡ τῶν ἀλογωτέρων συνήθεια, 16A).

Gregory: But isn't present reality dreadful? Certainly we hear about the soul's departure, but what we see is only the dead body, and we know nothing of the soul.<sup>7</sup>

Macrina asks: Surely you are not saying that you are afraid that the soul does not continue to exist? (17A)

Gregory: Yes, I see that belief in the survival of the soul is very important for leading a virtuous life, but I would like to see it proved. (20A)

They then agree that Gregory will play the role of the unbeliever, while Macrina will try to refute him.

Gregory starts by remarking that the body is a compound of the four elements. When this compound is dissolved, each of these elements reverts to its kind: water to water, earth to earth, etc. Where, then, is the soul to be situated?

Macrina answers: If you follow this line of reasoning, there is no place for the soul during life either (24B). More importantly, you could just as easily claim that the cosmos is nothing but a compound of those four elements and that there is no divine power which animates and governs all things.

Gregory answers: I would also like to see proof of this last view that everything comes from God and that the divine nature governs all things.

Here we have arrived at a central notion in Gregory's dialogue: the parallelism between man and cosmos. The cosmos does not exist without divine power, man does not exist without a soul. Macrina goes on to develop the idea that the entire creation proclaims its creator and that the word of God speaks in the order which the creation displays. Man is a *mikros kosmos*. Just as a divine power can be found in the great cosmos, so such a power is also to be found in the small cosmos. And this power is called soul.

Essentially, Gregory's objection is that both the world and man can be explained as a compound of the four elements. Should

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<sup>7</sup> ἔξοδον ψυχῆς ἀκούσαντες τὸ μὲν ὑπολειφθὲν ὁρῶμεν, τὸ δὲ χωρισθὲν ἀγνοῦμεν ... (16C).

something more be assumed, a divine Logos in the world and a divine element in man, the soul? Socrates' friends, too, made a similar objection. This parallel drawn between macrocosm and microcosm is remarkable in the sense that it seems to suggest a view of the divine as a power immanent in the world: a kind of world-soul as taught by the Stoa. The formulations, too, sound Stoic. Gregory talks about 'a divine power which possesses sagacity and wisdom and which pervades all things' (θεία δύναμις ἔντεχνός τε καὶ σοφὴ ... διὰ πάντων ἡκούσα 28A), expressions which are commonly found in the Stoa. But this immanence is just one aspect of the Divine. In the same context he also talks about τὸ ἐκ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὰ πάντα, 'that everything comes from God' (24C), which implies transcendence.<sup>8</sup>

After Macrina has connected the soul and God in this way, Gregory asks whether she is claiming that the soul and God are identical, which would be an absurd conclusion (28A).<sup>9</sup> Macrina cites the text of Genesis 1:26, which says that man 'was created in God's image'. So there is an image, a likeness, not identity (41B-C). God and soul are both spiritual (νοερά)—this is the similarity. But God is uncreated, man created—this is the difference.

It may seem that the argument in Gregory's dialogue which I have just outlined takes us rather far away from Plato's *Phaedo*. This is in fact suggested by the comparison between macrocosm and microcosm, even though the problem there is the same as Plato's: is there more than the compound of the elements? In fact, Gregory's argument, based on the biblical text 'Man was created in God's image', is actually very close to Plato. We should consider that Plato talked about a likeness to the Ideas, which are a divine reality. Gregory does not recognize Plato's Ideas, but speaks of a likeness to God. If we remember that, in the further development of Platonic thinking, the Ideas are sometimes seen as the thoughts of God, the similarity is even clearer. The soul is νοῦς, just as God is νοῦς.

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<sup>8</sup> An interesting combination of these two aspects is also found in the confession of Gregory Thaumaturgus (one century before Gregory of Nyssa), where he says of God the Son: ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν 'He who is above all things and is all things' (PG 45, 913A).

<sup>9</sup> For fear of such a conclusion, Justin, who was one of the first to link Christianity and Greek philosophical thinking, rejected the Platonic view of the soul's essential immortality. See *Dial.* 1,5 and 5,1-3, and commentary in J.C.M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher* (Leiden 1971).

But is the soul *only* 'mind'? I just said in connection with the *Phaedo* that Plato focused solely on the 'intellectual', on the soul by itself, in this dialogue, but that in later dialogues he also turned his attention to other movements in the human soul. Gregory's dialogue reflects this development, as is shown by Macrina's description of the soul:

ψυχή ἐστιν οὐσία γεννητή, οὐσία ζῶσα, νοερά,  
σώματι ὀργανικῶ καὶ αἰσθητικῶ δύναμιν ζωτικὴν καὶ τῶν  
αἰσθητῶν ἀντιληπτικὴν δι' ἑαυτῆς ἐνιείσα,  
ἕως ἂν ἡ δεκτικὴ τούτων συνεστήκη φύσις (29B).

'Soul is a created substance, a living substance' (I pass over these two characterizations here—the soul's createdness was briefly mentioned in the foregoing). 'It is νοερά', i.e. it has the character of *nous*, it is 'intellectual'. (This is what Gregory has been discussing so far in the argument developed above.). He now goes on to add: 'she instills by herself in the body that is fitted out with organs and senses the faculty of life and the capacity to grasp sense-perceptible things, as long as the nature that is receptive of these things continues to exist (i.e. as long as the body exists as a living body)'. So Gregory is talking here about effects which the soul, called 'intellectual', brings about in the body 'by itself'. And when Gregory goes on to discuss these functions of the soul, he says that they not only involve sensory perception but also the movements connected with ἐπιθυμία and θύμος.

With regard to these movements Gregory now asks whether they are essential to the soul or not. In her answer to this question Macrina first observes that the pagan philosophers were unable to give a satisfactory explanation. Therefore, she says, I will disregard them (she specifically mentions 'Plato's chariot' here (τὸ πλατωνικὸν ἄρμα, 49C), alluding to the comparison in the *Phaedrus*) and turn to the Bible, in particular to the Genesis text already quoted: 'God created man in his image'. This means that only what bears a likeness to God is essential to man. However, desire and the wrathful are not proper to God, and so are not proper to the soul either (52A–B). These movements can be characterized as πάθη τῆς φύσεως (56A), i.e. affects of nature, καὶ οὐκ οὐσία, and not essential. Macrina makes a curious comparison in this connection: the passions are warts (μυρμηκία, 56C) on the soul. Just as warts are a part of the skin, but do not really belong to it, so it is with the affects.

On further consideration, however, Macrina must recognize that these movements of the soul may also have a useful function (which is hardly compatible with the image of the warts). After all, the soul which is in the body cannot do without the organs of this body. In this way *epithumia* and *thumos* may also have a positive effect. But this is only true if the mind keeps control. Once reason has dropped the reins and is dragged along like a charioteer hanging behind his chariot (61B–C: Plato's chariot has clearly been replaced here by that of Hippolytus), the impulses of *epithumia* and *thumos* turn into πάθη, passions.

This brief outline suffices to show the following. In Gregory, as in Plato, there is room for the non-intellectual powers in the soul. However, the 'mind' remains the dominant power and constitutes man's essence. Gregory, like Plato again, makes room for *thumos* and *epithumia* with reluctance and little success. In other words: it is difficult for Gregory to give the physical in man its proper place.

This difficulty is easy to understand, given the Platonic influence on his thought. But how can such an approach to man be reconciled with the Christian doctrine of the body's resurrection? How does Gregory regard this Christian dogma? Although this question is not the real subject of my paper, I would like to devote some brief words to it.

How does Gregory defend the possibility of resurrection? Man, he says, is a soul which has joined up with a certain compound of the four elements. Death means a separation of soul and body in which the elements return to their kind and the soul lives on. But a bond remains between the soul and those particular elements water, earth, air, and fire which have dissolved. And at the end of time the soul retrieves these specific elements (76Aff.). This is a purely mechanical explanation which says nothing about the body's functions. Obviously many more questions can be asked, e.g. about the condition of the resurrected body. I gloss over these now and return to the features of Gregory's dialogue which bear a marked similarity to Plato's *Phaedo*:

- (a) man's essence is the intellectual soul;
- (b) the human soul is created in God's image and therefore bears a likeness (affinity) to God, just as the soul in Plato shows an affinity with the Ideas;
- (c) it is only with difficulty that room is made for the non-intellectual movements in man.

We are dealing here with a clear case of what is called the encounter between Greek philosophy and Christianity. A term also used for this is the Hellenization of Christianity.<sup>10</sup> Everyone is in agreement that this process exercised a profound influence on Western thinking. But philosophers and theologians assess this phenomenon in very different ways. Some regard the philosophical influence as unfortunate, because it alienated Christianity from its origin. Others see it as a positive development: philosophy provided the instruments for making faith acceptable to people trained in Greek thinking. This did not mean that the purity of faith was lost.<sup>11</sup>

The problem we are talking about here is complex and hardly allows brief treatment. I confine myself to mentioning a very pronounced view. In 1985 Charalambos Apostolopoulos published a book entitled *Phaedo Christianus*, in which he discusses the two dialogues compared above.<sup>12</sup> He argues there that Gregory followed so closely in Plato's footsteps that he should in fact be regarded as a Greek philosopher and not as a Christian. The title of his work is therefore misleading: the *Phaedo Christianus* is not Christian; it is not more Christian than Plato's *Phaedo*. Only the presentation is Christian, inasmuch as Gregory advances the Bible as the authoritative source. Gregory's position as a bishop forces him to do this. It is, however, 'Tarnung', camouflage.

Two elements can be distinguished in this theory: (a) Gregory is in effect a Greek philosophical thinker; (b) he is aware that this clashes with the Christian faith and therefore hides his intentions behind references to the Bible. It cannot be denied that Gregory has incorporated a great deal of Greek philosophy into his dialogue. One may argue that, from a modern point of view, this method is at odds with the *Kerugma* of the Gospel. But the author cannot prove that Gregory was aware of this and therefore camouflaged his intentions. This is in fact hard to maintain if the rest of Gregory's work is considered, as the author himself realizes. It

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<sup>10</sup> In the modern era particularly since A. von Harnack. See E. P. Meijering, *Die Hellenisierung des Christentums im Urteil Adolph von Harnacks*. Verh. Kon. Ned. Akad. v. Wet., Afd. Letterk. vol. 128. Amsterdam-Oxford-New York, 1985.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, E. P. Meijering, 'Zehn Jahre Forschung zum Thema Platonismus und Kirchenväter', *Theologische Rundschau* 36 (1971) 303-320.

<sup>12</sup> For an extensive discussion of this work, see *Vigiliae Christianae* 41 (1987) 191-197 (printed in this volume; see the following article).

seems to me that his judgement of Gregory's dialogue proceeds too much from his own view of the incompatibility of Greek philosophical thinking and Christian faith, and not from the position of the great Christian thinker who wrote it.

## BOOK REVIEW

Charalambos Apostolopoulos, *Phaedo Christianus. Studien zur Verbindung und Abwägung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem platonischen »Phaidon« und dem Dialog Gregors von Nyssa »Über die Seele und die Auferstehung«* (Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe XX, Bd. 188). Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York, Peter Lang, 1986. 416 S.

[192] Der Haupttitel dieses Buches hat beim ersten Anblick nichts überraschendes. Es wurde schon öfters bemerkt, dass Gregor einen *Phaedo Christianus* geschrieben hätte. Die literarische Einkleidung (eine Diskussion über die Seele mit Makrina an ihrem Sterbebett) erinnert deutlich an den Dialog Platons (eine Diskussion mit Sokrates über die Seele am Vorabend seines Todes). Dennoch enthält das Buch »eine These von revolutionierender Sprengkraft«, wie es der Text auf dem Umschlag ankündigt. Der Verf. behauptet zwar, dass es sich bei Gregors Dialog um einen Versuch, den *Phaedo Christianus* zu verfassen, handelt (S.10), fügt jedoch hinzu dass Gregor in Wirklichkeit nicht deutlich macht, dass er sich bei seinem Dialog von einem spezifisch christlichen Sinn, geschweige denn Frömmigkeitsgefühl, als Träger seiner Gedanken abhängig wußte (*ibid.*). Nicht der Platonismus, wie oft behauptet wird, sondern das christliche Dogma erweist sich als das Akzidenz seines Denkens (*ibid.*). Aus der Untersuchung des Verf. tritt Gregor nicht als ein christlicher Theologe oder Philosoph, sondern als griechischer Denker hervor (*ibid.*). Wer nun diese Aussage liest, mag sich darüber wundern, dass der Verf. seinem Buch den Titel *Phaedo Christianus* gegeben hat. Es handelt sich seiner Ansicht nach immerhin um einen Dialog ohne spezifisch christlichen Charakter. Die Absicht des Verf. wird aber deutlich, wenn er schreibt: »In Hinsicht auf seine vielfach christlich anmutende Perspektivität, dürfte wohl auch der platonische Dialog als *Phaedo Christianus* bezeichnet werden. Der Titel unserer Studien ist ohnehin auf den Dialog Platons beziehbar« (S.6). Obwohl diese Aussagen vieles erklären, bleibt die Wortwahl doch ein wenig verwirrend: ein 'christlicher *Phaidon*', der tatsächlich nur scheinbar christlich sein sollte.

Betrachten wir jetzt die Hauptthese des Verf.: Seiner Ansicht nach läuft ein roter Faden von der rituell-moralischen Reinigung des orphisch-pythagoräischen Mysteriendenkens zum geistigen Läuterungsprozess des platonischen *Phaidon*: die Wiederherstellung des Verhältnisses zum Göttlichen durch Katharsis; und dieser Gedanke setzte sich in Gregors Dialog *De anima et resurrectione* fort (vgl. S.148). Im Mittelpunkt seines Denkens stünde für Gregor die *wesenhafte* Gottähnlichkeit und Gottverwandtschaft der *Denkseele*. Ein Zitat: »Mag Gregor also die ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις schlechthin auch einmal εἰκὼν θεοῦ nennen (und sie im Hinblick auf die christliche Unterscheidung von mächtigem Ungeschaffenen und hinfälligem Erschaffenen auslegen), so muss man stets im Auge behalten, dass sie nur wegen des Ewigen, Unveränderlichen, [193] Transzendenten in ihr so heisst; denn nur auf den Geist trifft diese Formulierung eigentlich zu: In dem Grade, in dem der Mensch sich vergeistigt und das heisst für Gregor: sich *selbst* verwirklicht und befreit—von dem ἀλλότριον der Sinnlichkeit und des Materiellen überhaupt—, wird er »Gott ähnlicher«, gewinnt er Teil an der Natur des Guten, das nach Gregors sehr platonischer Anschauung das Wesen des Göttlichen ausmacht« (S.238). Und der Verf. streicht dies sehr deutlich heraus: Das der griechischen Tradition radikal entgegensetzende christliche Verständnis des Menschen und der Welt fehlt bei Gregor (S.130). Es wäre möglich, noch viele derartige Aussagen des Verf. zu zitieren. Er wird nicht müde den griechisch-philosophischen Charakter von Gregors Dialog zu unterstreichen, und er tut das mit grosser Überzeugungskraft.

Aber wie steht es denn um das Christentum in Gregors Schrift? Wenn der Verf. über diese Angelegenheit spricht, dann heisst es, dass den biblisch-christlichen Reminiszenzen eine rein formelle Bedeutung zukäme (S.128), dass man hinter dem zuweilen dogmatisch-christlich gefärbten Sprachstil den reellen, doch in gedämpftem Ton vorgetragenen philosophischen Sachverhalt entdecken könne (S.129). Manchmal wird in diesem Zusammenhang das Wort 'Tarnung' gebraucht (z.B. S.9, 129, 287); Gregor wird ein Meister der Selbstverschleierung genannt (S.114), oft wird ihm kirchenpolitische Rücksichtnahme zugeschrieben (z.B. S.110, 168, 345, Anm.79). Er ist »angstlich besorgt jeden offenen Widerspruch mit dem schon befestigten kirchlichen Dogma seiner Zeit zu vermeiden« (S.110), und »Ein Zug der Verstecktheit

gehört zu Gregors ängstlicher Art« (S. 111). Und der Verf. bemerkt, dass anscheinend diese christlich-theologischen Schlagworte (hinter welchen Gregor seine wirkliche Absichten zu 'tarnen' versuchte) bis heute ihre Funktion erhalten hätten, insofern selbst bewährte Forscher an diesen Vordergründigkeiten hängenbleiben und nicht imstande seien, vorurteilsfrei die wahren Urteile Gregors zu finden (S.128).

Die These des Verf. enthält also zwei Elemente: 1. Gregor ist im Grunde ein griechischer und zwar platonischer Denker; 2. Er ist sich dessen bewusst und deshalb versteckt er sich hinter die Fassade von absichtlich betonten Versicherungen und Zugeständnissen an die Bibel als dem einzigen »Gesetz und Mass« (S. 110)

Obwohl der Verf. diese zwei Elemente als eine Einheit präsentiert, möchte ich sie doch gerne voneinander trennen. Wenn der Verf. behauptet dass es moderne Gregorinterpreten gäbe, die Gregors eigenen Gedankengang unzureichend nachvollzögen und geneigt wären ihn in [194] die Richtung der späteren Theologie zu zwingen, dann hat er m.E. recht. Viele Ideen Gregors sind offensichtlich platonischer Herkunft und von einer Umgestaltung in christlichem Sinn ist bei ihm keine rede. Der Verf. hat dies abermals klar gezeigt. Man kann ihm auch beistimmen, dass es darunter Ideen gibt, die (in moderner Auffassung) in unüberbrückbarem Gegensatz zum *kerugma* des Evangeliums stehen (S.12); z.B. die *natürliche* Gottähnlichkeit der Seele, die Apokatastasis. Aber war dies auch Gregors Ansicht? Sah auch er zwischen seinen philosophischen Gedanken und dem christlichen Glauben einen solchen Gegensatz? Nur dann könnte man der hier gegebenen Interpretation seiner Schrift beistimmen. Aber das hat der Verf. eher vorausgesetzt als gezeigt. Und dies ist m.E. die verwundbare Stelle dieses Buches. Wenn die biblisch-christliche Komponente in Gregors Dialog (und in anderen Werken) behandelt wird, heisst es stets: Tarnung, Sichverstecken, kirchenpolitische Rücksichtnahme, oder christlich anmutende Atavismen (S.286), Zerrissenheit Gregors (117), Angst vor dem Häresie-Vorwurf (111), u.s.w. Woraus aber geht dies hervor? Ich meine, dass es möglich ist Gregors Schrift auch auf andere Weise zu lesen. Man könnte doch auch davon ausgehen, dass es für ihn einen solchen unüberbrückbaren Gegensatz zwischen Philosophie und Bibel nicht gab; dass für ihn sein platonisch gefärbtes Denken sich mit dem christlichen Glauben vereinbaren liess; dass es also

kein Lippenbekenntnis (S. 148) war, wenn er sagte (*De an. et res*, 49D), dass für ihn die Bibel »Gesetz und Mass« war. Zwar lässt sich dies nicht leicht beweisen, jedoch bin ich der Meinung, dass die Beweislast hier bei denjenigen liegt, die Gregor eine Doppelbödigkeit unterstellen. Und diesen Beweis hat der Verf. m. E. nicht geleistet. Wäre es möglich dass der Verf. das dogmatische Urteil, das er selbst vertritt, nämlich dass platonische Philosophie und christlicher Glaube unvereinbar sind, auch Gregor unterschiebt?

Ich bin geneigt dem Verf. beizustimmen wenn er sagt, dass die von Gregor entwickelte Anthropologie viele Elemente enthält, die mit dem christlichen Menschbild streitig scheinen (z.B. die These: Das Geist-Werden ist nur die Aktuierung eines wurzelhaften Geist-Seins, S.268). Aber wie sah Gregor dieses Verhältnis? Falls es für ihn keinen Gegensatz zwischen seiner platonisch gefärbten Anthropologie und dem christlichen Glauben gab, brauchte er sich ja gar nicht zu verstecken, und brauchte er auch gar keine Tarnung. Bei dieser Hypothese liest man Gregors Schrift anders, und, soweit ich jetzt sehe, besser. Dies impliziert nicht, dass man Gregors philosophische Aussagen in die Richtung des [195] späteren dogmatischen Denkens umdeutet. Man kann ihm Gedanken, die unserer Meinung nach mit dem christlichen Denken unvereinbar sind, unterschreiben. Die Frage ist nur, ob er das selber so gesehen hat. Ist dies nicht der Fall, dann soll man nicht vor kirchenpolitischer Rücksichtnahme u.s.w. reden; und dann war er nicht so zerrissen, wie der Autor behauptet.

Es folgen jetzt noch einige Einzelbemerkungen. S.4-5 sagt der Verf. über Platons *Phaidon*: »Hier ist der Gedanke anderer Dialoge, die Seele sei Mischung, durchaus verlassen« (die Aussage kehrt auf S.243 zurück; vgl. auch s.186 u.35). Das Verb 'verlassen' setzt voraus, dass es schon vor dem *Phaidon* eine völlig entwickelte Lehre über die Seele bei Platon gab. Ich meine, dass in dem *Phaidon* Platon unter Einfluss seiner 'Entdeckung' der Ideenwelt und der Verwandtschaft der Seele mit dieser Ideenwelt nur Auge hatte für 'die Seele an sich', das heisst für die Seele insoweit sie mit den Ideen verwandt ist. Die trichotomische Auffassung des '*Phaidros*' ist eine spätere Phase in der Entwicklung von Platons Denken über die Seele.

S.331 stellt der Verf. fest, dass in Gregors Dialog die Geistigkeit Gottes nicht radikal genug von der des Menschen unterschieden

werde, und fügt dann hinzu, dass dieselbe Sachlage bei den Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts vorliege. Er hätte aber besser Justin ausklammern können, der sich gerade wegen der Gefahr einer Gleichstellung von Gott und Seele der platonischen Seelenlehre widersetzt hat (siehe mein *An Early Christian Philosopher*, S.39, 84). Es ist wenigstens interessant zu bemerken, dass spätere christliche Denker diese Sache offensichtlich anders beurteilt haben.

S.293-297 verweilt der Verf. bei einem Textabschnitt in Gregors Dialog, in dem dieser über die Auferstehung handelt, und zwar im Sinne einer Allversöhnung der Menschen, das heisst einer Apokatastasis. Diese vollendete Einheit wird von Gregor mit dem Bild eines Festes geschildert. In diesem Abschnitt meint der Verf. eine Interpolation entdeckt zu haben. Gregor sagt dort: »In jener Zeit wird das Fest um Gott als eine gemeinsame Sache für alle veranstaltet werden«; und nachdem er nochmals den 'katholischen' Charakter mit den Worten ὧν πάντων μία καὶ σύμφωνος ἑορτὴ κατακρατήσκει ('uns alle wird *ein* »syn-phonisches« Fest überwältigen'), betont hat, fügt er hinzu: Ἐορτὴ δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος ὁμολογία τε καὶ ἐπίγνωσις. Der Verf. nennt dies einen ihm gezwungen anmutenden Satz, der sich weder sachlich noch stilistisch rechtfertigen lässt (S.294) Er teilt uns aber leider nicht mit, welche seine stilistischen Einwände wären. Ich meine, dass ein mit dem Partikel δέ eingeleiteter Erklärungssatz (der Verf. spricht von Definitionssatz, was mir nicht ganz richtig erscheint) nichts seltsames an sich hat. Der sachliche Einwand des Verf. liegt darin, dass seiner Meinung nach dieser Satz die Lehre von der Allversöhnung und der universalen Apokatastasis in Frage stelle. Der Verf. fühlt sich in dieser Auffassung bestätigt, weil ein Scholion bei μιὰ καὶ σύμφωνος (ἑορτῇ) diese Worte so erklärt, dass die Trennung zwischen Sünder und Gerechten aufrecht bleibt. Der vom Verf. angefochtene Satz soll von einem Gegner der Apokatastasislehre hinzugefügt sein und mit dem weiteren Inhalt dieses Abschnitts nicht übereinstimmen. Nach wiederholter Lektüre der Auseinandersetzung ist mir jedoch nicht deutlich geworden, in welcher Hinsicht dieser erklärende Satz etwas enthält das mit der Allversöhnung streitig wäre. Der *sensus obvius* dieses Textes ist ja doch, dass *alle* durch Katharsis gereinigte geistige Geschöpfe *ein* harmonisches Fest feiern werden, das besteht in der ὁμολογία τε καὶ ἐπίγνωσις des wahrlich Seienden. Dass spätere Autoren, wie aus dem Scholion hervorgeht, an »dem einen Fest« Anstoss

genommen haben, ist kein Argument für die Tilgung eines m.E. ganz einwandfreien Satzes. Der Verf. bemerkt, dass diese Tilgung gewiss erst nach einer textkritischen Bestätigung seiner Annahme geschehen kann. Ich kann ihm versichern, dass die Textüberlieferung, deren Daten mir in Druckfahnen zur Verfügung stehen, seine Annahme nicht unterstützen.

Im letzten Kapitel seines Buches erörtert der Verf. Gregors Begriff von der Unendlichkeit Gottes. Bekanntlich hat E. Mühlenberg diesem Thema seine Dissertation (*Die Unendlichkeit Gottes bei Gregor von Nyssa*, Göttingen, 1966) gewidmet, und zu zeigen versucht, dass in diesem Begriff sich Gregors christliches Denken zeigt. Der Verf. meint, dass auch hier nicht von einer spezifisch christlichen Komponente die Rede wäre, sondern von einem philosophischen Einfall, »der aus der persönlichen Begegnung des christlichen Neuplatonikers Gregor von Nyssa mit dem griechischen, vor allem plotinischen Begriff des Göttlichen gewachsen ist« (S.337). Ich möchte mich in diesem beschränkten Rahmen nicht auf diese schwierige Problematik einlassen; nur sei auf die Fehlinterpretation eines Textes, die vom Verf. in Nachfolge von Mühlenberg gemacht wird, hingewiesen. Die Unendlichkeit Gottes werde dort als »ein Übersteigen seiner eigenen Natur« gezeichnet; eine Aussage die vom Verf. als »kühner Gedanke« charakterisiert wird. Die Übersetzung des bezüglichen Satzes lautet: »Denn die [197] ausdehnungs- und qualitätslose, unbeschreibliche Kraft hat in sich die Aionen mit dem Ganzen des in ihnen Erschaffenen und *übersteigt* von allen Seiten her *die eigene Natur* durch die Ewigkeit der unendlichen Aionen«. Was mich an dieser Aussage erstaunte war nicht so sehr, dass von der göttlichen Natur gesagt wird, dass sie sich selbst übersteigt—das könnte ja tatsächlich eine 'kühne' Aussage sein—, wie die Tatsache, dass *dieses Übersteigen an etwas ausserhalb Gottes zugeschrieben wird* (»durch die Ewigkeit...«). Offensichtlich hat weder Mühlenberg (S.146-7) noch der Verf. daran Anstoss genommen; wer jedoch darüber nachdenkt, muss gestehen, dass das widersinnig ist. Aber sagt Gregor tatsächlich etwas derartiges? Der griechische Text lautet: Ἡ γὰρ ἀδιάστατος καὶ ἄποσος καὶ ἀπερίγραφτος δύναμις ἐν ἑαυτῇ τοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν τούτοις ἔχουσα κτίσιν καὶ πανταχόθεν τῆς τῶν αἰώνων ἀπειρίας τῇ ἀϊδιότητι τῆς ἰδίας ὑπερεκπίπτουσα φύσεως. Die beiden Autoren haben im letzten Satzteil den ersten Genitiv als zu τῇ ἀϊδιότητι gehörend und den

zweiten als *genitivus comparationis* verstanden, mit dem erwähnten befremdenden Ergebnis. M.E. sollte man aber den ersten Genitiv als *genitivus comparationis* auffassen und den zweiten mit τῇ ἀϊδιότητι verbinden. Dann ist die Aussage, dass die göttliche Natur die Unendlichkeit der Aionen durch die Ewigkeit ihrer eigenen Natur übersteigt. Von einem sich selbst transzendierenden Göttlichen, das vom Verf. S.339-341 wiederholt erwähnt wird, ist also bei Gregor keine Rede. Auch wäre dann die Verbindung τῆς .... ἀπειρίας τῇ ἀϊδιότητι die sowohl inhaltlich (was könnte 'die Ewigkeit der Unendlichkeit' bedeuten?) als auch syntaktisch (würde Gregor nicht τῇ τῆς ... ἀπειρίας ἀϊδιότητι geschrieben haben?) als unrichtig zu bezeichnen ist, beseitigt.

Obwohl der Rez. dem Verf. in verschiedenen Hinsichten nicht beistimmen kann, meint er dennoch, dass dieses Buch eine Bereicherung der Gregorliteratur bedeutet.

**PART THREE**

**PHILONICA**



## QUOTATIONS FROM PHILO IN CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S *PROTREPTICUS*

Philo's influence on the early Christian thinkers has been noted by many patristic scholars. From the second half of the second century onwards the Fathers of the Church have attempted to explain their Christian belief by means of instruments presented by Greek philosophy, of which they had made intensive study themselves. In this difficult enterprise they could follow the example of Philo, who, about two centuries ago, had tried to do the same with regard to his own belief. Clement lived in the same city as Philo and the access to the literary inheritance of the great Jewish author must have been quite easy to him. The following observations will show how Clement had Philo's writings, so to speak, on his desk, when he was writing his *Protrepticus*.

### 1. *Protr.* I 5,1-2 ~ *De plantatione* 3-9

In the first chapter of his *Protrepticus* Clement shows how the "new song of the Logos" has replaced the "song" of the old myths. According to Clement, this song of the Logos (or the logos himself, which is the same<sup>1</sup>), has brought the opposite elements of water and earth, fire and air, into a harmonious symphony. The passage in which Clement sketches this process (*Protr.* I 5,1) shows clear agreements with Philo's *De plantatione* 3 ff., where the "great Overseer and Planter", "the Lord of all things" is described in his bringing from chaos to order the great plant of the world. But the image of music, which dominates in Clement's treatise is not found in Philo's. One could have doubt, therefore, about a direct influence of Philo on Clement in this instance, since the idea of a [209] divine force bringing order in a chaos is a common idea in the writings of Platonic philosophers ever since the *Timaeus*.

But when Philo speaks about the cause of this order, he ascribes it to the *Logos of God*, who takes the place of the Overseer, the Planter, the Lord. Having stated that no material thing is strong

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<sup>1</sup> See *Protr.* I 6,1 Τί δὴ οὖν τὸ ὄργανον, ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, ὁ κύριος, καὶ τὸ ἔσμα τὸ καινὸν βούλεται;

enough to bear the burden of the world, he continues: "the everlasting Word of the eternal God is the very sure and staunch prop of the Whole. He it is, who extending Himself from the midst to its utmost bounds and from its extremities to the midst again, keeps up ... Nature's course" (tr. Whitaker-Colson in Loeb series vol. III).

This text has been transcribed to a large extent by Clement in *Protr.* I 5,2, as may appear from the following synopsis:

<i>De plant.</i> 8–9	<i>Clem. Protr.</i> I 5,2
... λόγος δὲ ὁ αἰδίδιος θεοῦ τοῦ	καὶ δὴ τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ἀκήρατον
αἰωνίου τὸ ὀχυρώτατον καὶ	("the song" of the Logos = the
βεβαιότατον ἔρεισμα τῶν	Logos), ἔρεισμα τῶν
ὅλων ἐστίν.	ὅλων ...
[9] οὗτος ἀπὸ τῶν μέσων	ἀπὸ τῶν μέσων ἐπὶ τὰ
ἐπὶ τὰ πέρατα καὶ	πέρατα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν
ἀπὸ τῶν ἄκρων ἐπὶ τὰ	ἄκρων ἐπὶ τὰ μέσα
μέσα ταθεὶς δολιχεύει τὸν	διαταθέν, ἡρμόσατο τόδε τὸ
τῆς φύσεως δρόμον...	πάν.

This literal agreement has been noticed by S.R.C. Lilla, in his monograph on Clement.<sup>2</sup> Mondésert, in his *Sources Chrétiennes* édition,<sup>3</sup> is rather vague "on reconnaît ici un thème traité par Philon, v.g.: *De plant.* 3 à 8"; this does not suggest that Clement *quotes* Philo, which quotation, moreover, stems for the greater part from *De plant.* 9.

The all penetrating nature of the Logos is a well-known Stoic doctrine. The way in which this doctrine is formulated here, reminds one of the manner in which, in Plato's *Timaeus*, the *world-soul* was stretched throughout the world body (*Tim.* 34b3: ψυχὴν δὲ εἰς τὸ μέσον αὐτοῦ θεὸς διὰ παντός τε ἔτεινεν κτλ.) [210]

## 2. *Protr.* 69,2 ~ *De somniis* II 193

In *Protr.* 67,1 ff. Clement shows how several Greek philosophers have seen a glance of the truth. At the end of 68,5 he quotes a text from Plato's second letter: περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα πάντ' ἐστι, κακῆϊνο αἴτιον ἀπάντων καλῶν (cf. 312e1–2). The term "king" in

<sup>2</sup> *Clement of Alexandria. A study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism.* Oxford, Univ. Press, 1971, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> Clément d'Alexandrie, *Le Protreptique*, ed. Cl. Mondésert, Paris, 1949 (reprint 1961).

this Plato text occasions the following digression. Clement asks: "Who is the king of the All?" And he answers: "God, the measure of the truth of all that is". Hence, he says, the knowledge of God is the measure of the possession of the truth (in man). As an illustration of this doctrine Clement quotes a text from *Deuteronomy*: "You shall not have unequal weights in your bag, one heavy, the other light; you shall not have unequal measures in your house, one large, the other small. You shall have a true and correct weight" (*Deut.* 25,13–15), and then Clement adds: στάθμιον καὶ μέτρον καὶ ἄριθμον τῶν ὅλων ὑπολαμβάνων (sc. Moses) τὸν θεόν. (In his further explanation Clement opposes the true and correct weight, which is the knowledge of God, to the unequal and wrong weight, which is the veneration of the idols.)

This remarkable explanation of the kingship of God by means of the idea of "measure" ("weight" and "number") is clearly based on the following text of Philo: Μωσῆς δὲ στάθμην καὶ ἀριθμὸν τῶν ὅλων ὑπέλαβεν εἶναι τὸν θεόν, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον νοῦν. δηλοῖ δὲ διὰ τούτων φάσκων..., and here follows the same *Deuteronomy* text. Clement must have had this text before his eyes when he wrote *Protr.* 69,1–2.

Clement changes στάθμην into στάθμιον, probably because he wants to make use of the term of *Deuteronomy* just quoted. In Philo the order is different; the corresponding statement precedes the Bible text.

Mondésert observes rather vaguely again: "*Pour l'exégèse allégorique, op. Philon, De Somniis* II 193 sq."

If one compares the text of Clement with that of Philo, the latter is much easier to understand than the former. Philo opposes the true measure, God, to the wrong measure, which is the human mind. In Clement the two "measures" are God (or the knowledge of God) and the idols. (Does he mean the knowledge of the idols or the veneration of the idols?) This opposition is less transparent; it betrays an adapting activity.

Finally, it should be noticed that one would expect to find the qualifications "weight, number, measure of the all" ascribed to the "logos of God" rather than to God himself. This holds of both Philo and Clement.[211]

3. *Protr.* II 22,3 ~ *De Cherubim* 94

At the end of a discussion of the mysteries Clement comes to the following conclusion: Νόμος οὖν καὶ ὑπόληψις κενὴ καὶ τοῦ δράκοντος τὰ μυστήρια ἀπατή τίς ἐστὶν θρησκευομένη, τὰς ἀμνήτους ὄντως μύησεις καὶ τὰς ἀνοργιάστους τελετάς εὐσεβείᾳ νόθῳ προστρεπομένων. What strikes the reader in the second part of this phrase (the part behind the semi-colon) is not the style figure of the oxymoron. Clement is partial to this figure; see p.ex. *Protr.* 64,3 σοφίᾳ τινὶ ἀσόφῳ: 99,2 νομίμων δὲ ἀνόμων. The remarkable element in this part of the phrase are the definite article (τὰς), which indicates something supposedly known to the reader, and the addition of the adverb ὄντως which seems to point in the same direction. How can Clement speak of “the initiations that are, *indeed*, no initiations and the mysteries that are no true mysteries”?

Here again Philo provides the explanation. After having opposed, in his treatise *De Cherubim*, the divine and the human feasts, he states with regard to the latter that they, especially when held in sacred temples—Philo must have in mind the mysteries —, result in θυσίας ἀνέρους, ἱερεῖα ἄθνητα, εὐχὰς ἀτελεῖς, ἀμνήτους μύησεις, ἀνοργιάστους τελετάς, νόθον εὐσεβείαν κτλ.

Obviously Clement had this Philo text at hand, when he wrote the passage under discussion, and that is why he could write about ἀμνήτους μύησεις as something known; hence τὰς ἀμνήτους μύησεις.

The adverb ὄντως points in the same direction. This adverb lays special stress on a concept or an expression that is already known or is supposed to be known to the reader. When ὄντως is added to a *concept*, it says that the concept is used “in its true sense”. Clement uses it very often: p.ex. *Protr.* 94,1 ὁ ὄντως πατήρ; 84,6 ἡ ὄντως σήμερον; 117,2 τὸ ὄντως καλόν; 23,1 τὸν ὄντως ὄντα θεόν etc. When added to an *expression* it means that the author underlines this expression, which is often a saying of another author, that is to say a quotation, like here in *Protr.* 22,3. Similar cases are found in Basil, *In Hexaemeron* I 2 (P.G. 29, 8B): “Ὀντως ἰστὸν ἀραχνῆς ὑφαίνουσι, which is a quotation from Isaiah 59,5; and in Gregory of Nyssa, *De tridui spatio* (GNO IX, p. 305,3): ὄντως οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι’ ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which is a quotation from *Gal.* 1,1.

Thus adding the adverb ὄντως in *Protr.* 22,3 Clement says something like “as it has been said correctly”. It is a way of referring to a saying of another author without mentioning his name. [212]

4. *Protr.* 67,2 ~ *De somniis* II 258

From the three texts treated above it is obvious that Clement, while writing his *Protrepticus*, had Philo's work to hand. This knowledge may perhaps help to solve a textual problem in *Protr.* 67,2.

In the previous discussion (from the beginning of ch. 5 onwards; the division in chapters is misleading here; one should consider ch. 5 and 6 as one whole, the contents of which are indicated in the first phrase of ch. 5, *Protr.* 64,1) Clement has tried to show that many philosophers have sought the principles of things in the elements, water, earth, etc., in other words in material realities. In Clement's view, the principle of things must have a divine nature and all things are subjected to it. Hence he addresses himself rhetorically to the philosophy with the following question: Τί γάρ, ὦ πρὸς τῆς ἀληθείας, τοὺς σοὶ πεπιστευκότας δεικνύεις ῥύσει καὶ φορᾶ δίναις τε ἀτάκτοις ὑποβεβλημένους; "Why, in the name of truth, do you show those who put their trust in you that they are under the dominion of "flux" and "motion" and "fortuitous vortices"?" (tr. Butterworth in Loeb series). This is the reading of the text in Stählin's edition in the *Corpus of Berlin* (G.C.S.; third ed. by Ursula Treu, 1972), and in the other modern editions (*Loeb*, *Sources Chrétiennes*).

The manuscripts, however, all dependent upon the famous Arethas codex, written by Baanes in 914, run as follows: Τί γάρ ὦ πρὸς ἀληθείας, τοὺς σοὶ πεπιστευκότας δεικνύεις ῥύσει καὶ φθορᾶ δειναῖς τε καὶ ἀτάκτοις ὑποβεβλημένους;

The proposal to change φθορᾶ into φορᾶ has been made by R. Münzel, the other "correction" stems from Th. Heyse. As appears from Stählin's introduction (p. LXXXI–LXXXII) the proposals were made in unpublished writings. Hence the exact reasons for these changes can only be guessed at. Münzel's main argument seems to have been Theophrastus, *De igne* 54: εἰ δ' ἐν φορᾷ τινι καὶ ῥύσει τὸ πῦρ ... (cf. Stählin's *app. crit.*).

But why should the text of the manuscripts (φθορᾶ) not be maintained? The idea of a philosophy that makes man subjected to destruction (that is to say, subjected to material elements that are subjected to ruin) fits in nicely here.

Moreover, in *De somniis* II 258 Philo says of the σωματικά (the same subject-matter as in Clement here): ἄπερ ἐν ῥύσει καὶ φθορᾶ φθειρομένη καὶ φθειρούση θεωρεῖται. This is much more exact

parallel than that from Theophrastus; it is, moreover, found in a work, from which Clement borrowed already earlier. See nr. 2 above.[213]

It is true that here too the manuscript reading φθορᾶ has been changed into φορᾶ(!) This was done by the well-known Philo scholar Mangey, and the editors of the English edition (Loeb) and of the new French edition followed his example. But Wendland, author of the famous critical edition, retained the manuscript reading; rightly so, I believe. For although the tournure φθορᾶ φθειρομένη καὶ φθειρούση sounds somewhat strange, what Philo intends to say is not difficult to guess. He makes an attempt to ascribe to φθορᾶ besides its normal intransitive meaning (φθειρομένη), a transitive meaning as well (καὶ φθειρούση). See the German translation, edited by Cohn, Heinemann, Adler und Theiler (*Philo von Alexandria. Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, Berlin <sup>2</sup>1962, Bnd VI): "das sich unserem Anblick als im Zustand des Fliessens und der zugrundegehenden und zugrunderichtenden Vergänglichkeit darstellt".

As for the reading δειναῖς τε καὶ ἀτάκτοις, I do not see why it should not be accepted. Therefore I propose to maintain the reading of the manuscripts.

THE FIRST FRAGMENT OF PHILO'S *QUAESTIONES*  
IN *GENESIM*

Philo's *Quaestiones in Genesim* have been handed down only indirectly. A considerable number of fragments has been found in the so-called *Catena*e, in Procopius and in some anthologies. These fragments were edited recently by Miss Françoise Petit in the series, "Les Oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie", vol. 33. See *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979) 294-295.

There is, moreover, an Armenian translation of the *Quaestiones*, probably dating from the 5th century. This translation was edited by J.B. Aucher in 1826, with a Latin translation. In the Loeb series R. Marcus published an English rendering of the Armenian text. In his preface he writes: "For various reasons we can be reasonably sure that the Armenian version has faithfully preserved Philo's meaning except in a few cases where the Greek text used by the translator was corrupt or ambiguous or unusually obscure".

In her excellent edition of the fragments, Miss Petit has, on many occasions, made usage of the Armenian version to restore the Greek text in cases where the manuscripts did not give a decisive answer. In this respect the first fragment presents an interesting case. Two of the three manuscripts read οἶοντε, the third οἶονται. Because of the Armenian version Miss Petit conjectures οἶόν τε. In the same fragment she makes still another conjecture: she reads ἦ instead of ἡ, because of the Greek context. Here the Armenian text was corrupt and had to be mended as well.

The purpose of this article is to give a thorough analysis of the text of the fragment, which will lead to the conclusion that the second conjecture has to be accepted but that in the other case the manuscript reading should be maintained.

For the convenience of the reader the three texts concerned follow here in full; viz. a) the Greek text of the fragment as it has been edited by Miss Petit; b) the Latin version by Aucher; c) the English rendering by Marcus.[314]

a) Διὰ (τί) τὴν κοσμοποιίαν ἐπιλογιζόμενός φησιν Μωϋσῆς· "αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, (ὅτε ἐγένετο) ";

Τὸ μὲν "ὅτε ἐγένετο" ἄοριστον ἔοικε χρόνον ἐμφαίνειν· τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ἔλεγχος δυσωπῶν τοὺς συγκεφαλαιουμένους ἀριθμὸν ἐτῶν ἀφ' οὗ τὸν

κόσμον οἶόν τε γενέσθαι. Τὸ δὲ “αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως” ἤτοι δεικτικόν ἐστιν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τεύχους ὃ τὴν κοσμοποιίαν περιέχει ἢ ἀναφορὰ τῶν εἰρημένων περὶ τῆς κοσμοποιίας πρὸς τὰ ἐπ’ ἀληθείας γεγονότα. (In the last sentence Miss Petit reads *ὁ* instead of *ὃ*. This seems to be a misprint and has, therefore, been amended here.)

b) “Quare mundi creationem in mente revolvens ac recensens dicit: *Hic est liber generationis caeli et terrae, quum facta sunt?*”

Illud *quum facta sunt* indeterminatum atque incircumscripsum, ut visum est, tempus indicat. Hoc autem argumentum erit confutans illos qui suppetunt numerum quendam annorum in unum redactum ex illo tempore quo mundus creari potuerit. *Hic autem liber generationis* ceu indicativus est libri suppositi, qui mundi continet creationem: ubi innuitur dicta de mundo condito ad veritatem ipsam pertinere”.

c) “Why, when he (Moses) considers and reflects on the creation of the world, does he say, “This is the book of the coming into being of heaven and earth, when they came into being”?

The expression “when they came into being”, which is undetermined and uncircumscribed, apparently indicates time. And this evidence confutes those who consider it to be a certain number of years summed under one head, during which the cosmos was to come into being. But the expression, “this is the book of coming into being” is meant to indicate a supposed book which contains the creation of the world and an intimation of the truth about the creation of the world”.

The fragment consists of a question and the answer to this question. This is the structure of the present work of Philo, which therefore is often named *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim*. The answer to this question consists of two parts, each of which explains a part of the text under discussion.

1. The *question* put by Philo here concerns a statement of the author of Genesis at the end of the creation story, one could say a concluding observation. Philo characterizes Moses’s way of speaking by adding the words τὴν κοσμοποιίαν ἐπιλογιζόμενος.

With regard to the Latin and English translation of the verb [315] ἐπιλογίζεσθαι (*in mente revolvens et recensens*; “when he considers and reflects on the creation”) one may put the question, whether

Philo does consider the words “this is the book of coming into being” as a *reflection* on the *creation*. I would prefer to understand the participle ἐπιλογιζόμενος in the sense of ‘concluding’, ‘making a final observation’ (epilogue) and τὴν κοσμοποιίαν as ‘the story of creation’, a meaning which it often has in Philo, for example in the last sentence of the present fragment. A strong argument in favour of this interpretation is the parallel text in *De opificio mundi* 129: Ἐπιλογιζόμενος δὲ τὴν κοσμοποιίαν κεφαλαιώδει τύπῳ φησὶν· «αὕτη ἡ βίβλος τῆς γενέσεως», which is very well rendered by Whitaker-Colson (Loeb): “In his concluding summary of the story of creation he says ...”

It is perhaps worthwhile to draw attention to the fact that the verb ἐπιλογίζεσθαι has been rendered by two verbs, both in the Latin and English translation, who follow the Armenian here. One finds this way of rendering often in Latin translations, p.ex. the *Timaeus* translations by Cicero and Calcidius. Miss Petit observes (p. 35) that in reconstructing the Greek text one has to reckon with this habit of the Armenian translator. In the next sentence he renders ἄοριστος by two words again. If we did not dispose of the Greek text one would be inclined to think that Philo had used here two equivalents.

2a) Philo first explains the last words of the Bible text under discussion: “when they came into being”. This expression, he says, indicates an undetermined time. (Here Markus makes a serious mistake by combining ἄοριστον or rather its Armenian equivalents with the preceding part of the phrase and thus distorts the way of thought. See below.)

According to Philo the expression “when they came into being”, which leaves the indication of time undetermined, is used here purposely in order to make clear that there is no answer to the question “when” it happened. In his treatise *Legum Allegoriae* I,19 Philo says this explicitly: ἐπιφέρει τὸ “ὅτε ἐγένετο,” τὸ πότε κατὰ περιγραφὴν οὐ διορίζων: “he adds, “When it came into being,” not defining “when” by a determining limit” (tr. Whitaker-Colson).

Using this indefinite expression, Philo continues, Moses refutes those who think they are able to compute the number of years that passed away since the world came into existence. (For the moment I leave οἶόν τε out of account). Attempts of this kind are very well-known. Counting together the time indications mentioned in the Bible one computed the life time of this world. Aucher’s Latin

translation shows that the Armenian [316] translation at least could be understood in this way. Marcus, however, has again a divergent rendering, to which I shall return below.

Now the question arises which reading one has to follow, that of the manuscripts (οἶοντε, οἶονται; from a phonetic point of view they are equivalents; hence I speak of one reading) or that of Miss Petit, who, on the basis of the Armenian translation, conjectured οἶόν τε. The idea of 'possibility' which made her go in this direction is also found in the Latin translation: *ex illo tempore quo mundus creari potuerit*. If one chooses the last reading, the argument runs as follows: "This is a refutation of those who compute the number of years since the world *may* have come into existence." If one follows the reading οἶονται, it sounds as follows: "This is a refutation of those who compute the number of years since the world in their opinion has come into existence". In my view, it is not difficult to make the choice. The idea of possibility ('may') seems to be out of place here. On the other side, the verb οἶσθαι often has a pejorative meaning, having the connotation of 'arrogance'. (See the Philo Index of Leisegang, s.v. οἴησις). And this is exactly what Philo wants to suggest here: the opinion of those who think they are able to calculate the number of years since the word came into existence is, in fact, a proof of arrogance.

As it was observed above, Marcus' rendering is substantially different again. He forces (the Armenian equivalent of) ἀφ' οὗ by rendering it with 'during which'. According to him Philo does not oppose those who compute the time which passed away *since* the creation took place, but those who calculate the time *during which* it happened.

Possibly he has been misled here by the text of *Legum Allegoriae* just mentioned, where Philo explains the same Genesis text, saying: "But that you may not suppose that the Deity makes anything *in definite periods of time*, but may know that to mortal kind the process of creation is unobserved, undescribed, incomprehensible, he adds, "When it came into being," not defining "when" ..." (tr. Whitaker-Colson).

One should, moreover, notice that in Marcus' translation there is no coherence. He makes Philo argue as follows: The expression "when they came into being" is an indication of time. Herewith Moses refutes those who calculate the time of ... (it does not matter now what time is calculated). In this argument Philo's opposition

between 'indefinite' and 'calculation' (which supposes definiteness) has disappeared.

2b) Philo's explanation of the beginning words of the quotation, "this is the book of coming into being", is more complicated. The complicated [317] nature of Philo's exegesis explains probably the corrupted state in which it has been handed down. However, from the particle ἥτοι Miss Petit concluded correctly that Philo presented a twofold explanation of the Bible words under discussion. Hence she proposed to read ἥ instead of the article ἡ of the manuscripts before ἀναφορά.

Let us, by way of hypothesis, accept this conjecture and see how Philo's argument runs now by making an attempt of translation: "The expression 'This is the book of the coming into being' indicates either the book under discussion, that contains the story of creation or <that there is> a reference <of agreement> between what has been said about the creation and that what truly has taken place".

The first explanation is rather simple; the expression "this is the book of the coming into being" means: here you have the book, which contains the story of creation. In other words: it speaks of *the book* and *its contents*.

In the second explanation the expression indicates that there is an agreement between what has been said (τὰ εἰρημμένα) and what has happened, the events (τὰ γεγενότα). Thus, the expression "this is the book of the coming into existence" means: here you have a narrative about the creation, that renders exactly what has happened. In other words: 'book' stands here for *the text* and 'the coming into existence' for *the actual event* of being created.

In Aucher's Latin translation one finds an exact rendering of the ideas mentioned just now, but because of the disappearance of the disjunctive nature of the sentence, that what was a second explanation in Philo has become a continuation of the first one. If one, instead of *ceu ... ubi*, reads *aut ... aut* or *vel ... vel*, the rendering is completely exact: Hic autem liber generationis *aut* indicativus est libri suppositi, qui mundi continet creationem *aut* innuitur dicta de mundo condito ad veritatem ipsam pertinere.

Marcus' English translation of this sentence contains another serious error. Where the Greek text reads τοῦ ὑποκειμένου τέχους and Aucher renders *libri suppositi* he translates "a *supposed* book".

One must state that he has been led by a bad genius in rendering this first question.

Miss Petit's conjecture, we may conclude, renders it possible, indeed, to give a satisfactory explanation of Philo's exegesis. On the other hand, the rather sophisticated nature of the second part of this explanation makes it clear that the text was not well understood and, in consequence, was not well read. The same holds for the first passage treated above. In [318] both cases a simple misreading (of OIONTE and H) explains the remarkable ventures of the text of this first question.

## THE WORLD OF IDEAS IN PHILO

### An Interpretation of *De Opificio Mundi* 24–25

To Philo the one true source of philosophical activity is the Bible, and in particular its first five books, the Law. Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, has attained “the very summit of philosophy” (*Opif.* 8), and the only task of a philosopher is to study and to explain Moses’ words, which embody a beauty of ideas transcending human capacity of speech and hearing (*Opif.* 4).

In explaining Moses’ words Philo makes use of his knowledge of Greek philosophy. And in explaining the creation story of Genesis he uses in particular Plato’s ‘creation story’ as told in the *Timaeus*.

In *Tim.* 28 Plato introduces the imagery of a craftsman who, looking at the eternal ideas, makes the sense-perceptible world. Philo explains the creation story of Genesis in such a manner that it depicts the making of two worlds, a world of ideas which he calls the *kosmos noetos*, and the sense-perceptible world, as we know it.

Philo is quite aware of the fact that such an interpretation of the Genesis text is not self-evident. That is why he devotes to this matter an extensive preliminary section of his commentary (*Opif.* 13–25).

Genesis says that the world was created in six days. But, Philo remarks, this does not mean that the maker needed a length of time for his work. God made the whole world at once, whereby planning, commanding and creating coincide. But since things that come to existence require order, and order involves number, and the number six is the number most suitable to productivity, Moses declared that the world was created in six days.

On the other hand, at the end of the first day of creation Genesis says: καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρῶ, ἡμέρα μία. Thus it does not speak of ‘the first day’ but of ‘one day’, or as we perhaps should say ‘day one’. In Philo’s view this expression shows that here Moses does not deal with the sense-perceptible world but with the noetic world which has the [210] nature of oneness (τὴν μονάδος φύσιν, *Opif.* 15). This replacement of the expected πρώτη by μία—which in

fact is a hebraism—is sufficient pretext for Philo to discover in Genesis the creation of ideas.

In *Opif.* 15–25 Philo elaborates his view of this noetic world. He compares God with an architect who is going to build a city. Just as this architect cannot work without a plan of that city in his mind, so God, wishing to create this sense-perceptible world, knew that it would not be faultless unless it was made in the likeness of an impeccable, *i.e.*, intelligible, pattern. Evidently Philo is walking here in Plato's footsteps, although he does not follow him in his terminology: instead of ζῶον νοητόν he speaks of the κόσμος νοητός.

Among the disciples of Plato there was much dissension about the interpretation of the imagery of the *Timaeus*. Those who chose for a more or less literal interpretation and understood the Demiurge as representing the highest principle had to meet the problem of the location of the world of ideas. There was a tendency among these thinkers to put those ideas within the highest principle and to interpret them as its thoughts.

Philo's solution to this problem is as follows: the world which consists of ideas has no other location than the divine logos who has ordered this world. Thus the noetic world is *in* the logos of God (*Opif.* 20).

After discussing some other problems concerning the world of ideas Philo comes to a final observation, which runs as follows in the critical edition of L. Cohn and P. Wendland:

[24] εἰ δέ τις ἐθελήσειε γυμνοτέροις χρήσασθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, οὐδὲν ἂν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἢ θεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιούντος· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ πόλις ἕτερόν τί ἐστίν ἢ ὁ τοῦ ἀρχιτέκτονος λογισμὸς ἤδη τὴν [νοητὴν] πόλιν κτίζειν διανοουμένου.

[25] τὸ δὲ δόγμα τοῦτο Μωυσέως ἐστίν, οὐκ ἐμόν· τὴν γοῦν ἀνθρώπου γένεσιν ἀναγράφων ἐν τοῖς ἔπειτα διαρρήδην ὁμολογεῖ, ὡς ἄρα κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ διευτυπώθη (Gen. 1, 27). εἰ δὲ τὸ μέρος εἰκὼν εἰκόνας [δῆλον ὅτι] καὶ τὸ ὅλον εἶδος, σύμπας οὗτος ὁ αἰσθητὸς κόσμος, εἰ μείζων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐστίν, μίμημα θείας εἰκόνας, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἡ ἀρχέτυπος σφραγίς, ὃν φαμεν νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμον, αὐτὸς ἂν εἴη [τὸ παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν] ὁ θεοῦ λόγος.

This passage has been dealt with in numerous works on Philo, but its exact meaning is still remarkably elusive. In particular Philo's way of arguing in ch. 25 has remained unclear. Obviously this state of affairs has influenced the tradition of the text and its problematic constitution in the critical edition. [211]

To start with, it must be said that the general structure of the whole passage is clear. One discerns three steps: 1. First Philo puts forward his thesis, *viz.*, that the noetic world is nothing else than the logos of the creating God. 2. Then this thesis is illustrated by the example of the human architect. 3. Finally Philo shows that this thesis is not his own invention but is already present in Moses' words in Genesis 1, 27.

Each of these three steps asks for some further explanation. Hence I will now discuss successively Philo's thesis, its illustration and the Mosaic testimony.

*Philo's thesis*—In the previous discussion Philo had reached the conclusion that the noetic cosmos was *in* the logos of God. His intention now is to make an attempt at giving this conclusion a greater degree of precision. So he says: 'If one would wish to say it in a more simple way, the noetic world <is not only *in* the logos but> *is* the logos of God in His very act of creating'. In other words, in the creative act of God His logos and the noetic cosmos coincide.

One should observe that this more simple way of speech is not a simplification. On the contrary, because it is more precise, it is nearer to the truth. *Simplex sigillum veri*. For a comparable use of the term γουνός, see *Probus* 43, *Contempl.* 78, *Sacrif.* 30.

*The illustration*—Philo illustrates his thesis by referring to the case of the human architect. The plan of the future city (*i.e.* in the mind of this architect), he says, is nothing else than the *logismos* (intellectual faculty) *of the architect* in his very act of planning the city. In the same way the noetic world is nothing else than the *logos of God* in his very act of creating.

Here one should not be misled by the fact that in the case of the human architect Philo speaks of the act of planning, in the case of God of the act of creating. This difference reflects the difference between the creative activity in man and that in God. In God, as was said above, planning and creating coincide, in man these are different phases of the process.

But this difference is of no consequence in the present comparison. Philo compares the coinciding of the planned world (= noetic cosmos) and the logos of God with the coinciding of the planned city and the logismos of the human architect.

*Moses' testimony*—This thesis, Philo continues, is not an invention of mine but is an implication of what Moses says in Genesis 1,

27, viz., that man was made after the image of God. This statement must surely [212] amaze the reader. How can the doctrine of Moses that man was made after God's image be an argument in favour of the coinciding of God's logos and the world of ideas?

The text containing the explanation of this statement has been handed down in a form which the German editors of a critical edition found unacceptable. They eliminated two elements: δῆλον ὅτι at the start, τὸ παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν at the end. They were followed by C.J. de Vogel, *Greek Philosophy*, nr 1293, and R. Arnaldez in the Lyon edition of Philo (*Les oeuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie*, vol. 1). Colson in the Loeb series does not delete δῆλον ὅτι, as will appear below.

Arnaldez gives the following French translation: "Or si la partie est image d'image, et si la forme tout entière, totalité de ce monde sensible, puisqu'elle est plus grande que l'image humaine, est imitation de l'image divine, il est clair que le sceau archétype, que nous disons être le monde intelligible, ne saurait être que le Logos de Dieu".

J. Cohn's German translation runs as follows: "Wenn aber schon der Teil Abbild eines Bildes ist, *also* auch die ganze Gattung, diese ganze sinnlich wahrnehmbare Welt, da sie ja grösser ist als das menschliche Abbild, eine Nachahmung des göttlichen Bildes, so ist klar, dass das ursprüngliche Siegel (das Urbild), wie wir die gedachte Welt nennen, die Vernunft Gottes selbst ist".

The only difference between these two renderings is the word *also* in the German translation (which I have italicized). This word has no basis in the *textus receptus*, which obviously was accepted by the translator. On the other hand, it indicates a consequence which is fundamental for Philo, as will appear in what follows.

A new attempt at interpretation is clearly called for. Philo begins this argumentation as follows: εἰ δὲ τὸ μέρος εἰκὼν εἰκόνοϛ, ... For the understanding of this protasis it is vital to know that Genesis 1, 27, (God created man) κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ, was interpreted by Philo in a peculiar manner. According to him, these words do not mean that "man was made an image of God" but that he "was made *after* the image of God". In other words, there is an image of God and man was made after that image, so that he is "an image of an image".<sup>1</sup> Philo says this *disertis verbis* in *Her.* 231 "ἐποίησε", γάρ

<sup>1</sup> In a footnote at his German translation of *Opif.* 25 Cohn draws attention to the fact that one finds a similar idea in the Midrash.

φησι, “ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον” οὐχὶ εἰκόνα θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ “κατ’ εἰκόνα”. If εἰκὼν εἰκόνος is said of man, one may conclude that the subject of this protasis, τὸ μέρος, indicates man.

Before going further one must recall to mind that the image after which man was made is the image of God (κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ), and, [213] moreover, that *the image of God is the logos*. This is a vital element in the argumentation. See for this equivalence *Fug.* 101: αὐτὸς (sc. ὁ λόγος θεοῦ) εἰκὼν ὑπάρχων θεοῦ, and *Conf.* 147: θεοῦ γὰρ εἰκὼν λόγος ὁ πρεσβύτατος.

Now one may circumscribe the content of the protasis as follows: ‘If it is true what Genesis 1, 27 says, *viz.*, that man, being part of a whole, was created as an image of the image of God, *i.e.* the logos of God, ...’. Here the right way of arguing requires that now the consequence of Moses’ statement is given. The *textus receptus*, however, adds another protasis which is not a statement of Moses. See the French translation: “*et si la forme tout entière ...*”. The German rendering adds an *also*, thus drawing a conclusion—which must be a conclusion drawn from Moses’ words—and makes the argumentation coherent, but the *textus receptus* does not give this *also* a textual foundation.

All the manuscripts, however, do give a conclusion here, in the form of an apodosis: δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ...

Let us now read that part of the text concerning which we no longer have any serious doubt: εἰ δὲ τὸ μέρος εἰκόνος, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὅλον ... “If the part is an image of an image, then it is evident that the whole is so too”. From what follows it is manifest that ‘the whole’ means here ‘the whole sense-perceptible world’. Thus the argument is: ‘if man as part of the cosmos is an image of God’s image (= an image of the logos), then the whole cosmos is so too’. The value of this argument will be discussed later, but from a formal point of view the reasoning looks sound.

But what about εἶδος? All manuscripts and all editions except one read τὸ ὅλον εἶδος. From a formal point of view, however, this reading is hardly acceptable. The argument ‘from the part to the whole’ is a kind of *a fortiori* argument, but how could one argue from ‘the part’ to ‘the whole *form*’? Moreover, what does ‘form’ mean here? From what follows it must indicate the sense-perceptible world. But does this term give a proper indication of that world? Our suspicion is that εἶδος does not belong to what precedes. But could it belong to what follows? I think it could. One finds

there another δῆλον ὅτι καὶ. This seems to be an indication that Philo continued his argumentation with another conditional period. This means that before σύμπας οὗτος ὁ αἰσθητὸς κόσμος Philo started another protasis: εἰ δ' ὁ σύμπας. Now the first five letters make εἶδος, and this is, as it seems, the origin of that strange εἶδος in the manuscripts. [214]

An analysis of Philo's train of thought had brought me years ago to this conjecture, when I discovered that Colson-Whitaker in their Loeb edition presented the same solution. (They do not say a word about it, neither in a footnote at the text nor in "the supplementary list of cases, not mentioned in the footnotes, where the text printed is not vouched for by any manuscript of ancient authority" (in Vol V, p. 613-4). Perhaps they considered this conjecture as one of the cases which they did not mention, *viz.*, that of a "wrong division of words, in which the actual letters are correct". But this is not completely true here. The manuscripts have a sigma too many. Moreover, the conjecture is in itself deserving of mention.

If one accepts this conjecture Philo's argumentation consists of two steps which form a formal point of view are parallel:

εἰ δὲ τὸ μέρος ..., δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ..  
εἰ δ' ὁ σύμπας ..., δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ...

The second step of the argument runs as follows: "If this entire sensible world, which is greater than man (this must be the meaning; the actual text will be discussed below), is an image of a divine image, it is evident that ..." One observes that this protasis takes up the conclusion which was formulated in the previous apodosis, just as the first protasis took up the statement of Moses in Genesis 1, 27. Thus Philo says: "If it is true that the whole sense-perceptible world is an image of a divine image (μίμημα θείας εἰκόνοϋς is the equivalent of εἰκὼν εἰκόνοϋς; the 'divine image' is, of course, the divine logos), then it follows that ... But what follows then?

Philo says: "then it is evident that the archetypal seal, which we declare the noetic cosmos to be, is the logos himself". Or to say it in a more simple manner "then it is evident that the noetic cosmos *is* the logos of God". *Quod erat demonstrandum!*

This conclusion asks for some further explanation because Philo jumps to a conclusion without formulating all the steps of the argument.

In the previous sentence Philo has come to the conclusion that the visible world is an image of God's image; in other words the visible world is made after God's image, the *logos* of God. Now one should bear in mind that earlier (*Opif.* 16) Philo had already shown that the visible world was made after the pattern of the noetic world. Thus he has reached two conclusions: 1. The visible cosmos is an image of the noetic cosmos. 2. The visible cosmos is an image of the *logos* of God. [215] These two conclusions allow Philo to draw his final conclusion: the noetic cosmos and the *logos* of God coincide. Herewith he has shown that the thesis proposed at the beginning of *Opif.* 24, *viz.*, that in the act of creating *νοητὸς κόσμος* and *λόγος θεοῦ* coincide, is supported by Moses' authority and, in consequence, is valid and true.

The argumentation of *Opif.* 25 can be summarized as follows:—man, being part of the cosmos, has been created as an image of God's image (= the *logos*);—then *a fortiori* the whole cosmos has been created as an image of God's *logos*;—now it was shown earlier that the cosmos was created as an image of the noetic cosmos;—Ergo: noetic cosmos and *logos* of God coincide (in the act of creating).

The previous analysis has made the structure of the argumentation perfectly clear. But it does leave the reader with some problems: 1. with regard to the contents of the passage, 2. with regard to the constitution of the text.

*ad* 1. With regard to the contents two questions arise: a) how could Philo make the first step of his argumentation? How could he argue from the part to the whole, from man to sense-perceptible world? Elsewhere Philo states that man was created after the image of God, not as a whole consisting of body and soul, but only in so far as he has a rational part, a soul. The *a fortiori* argument should presuppose that the world, too, is a composition of body and soul. But Philo does not subscribe to such a theory; he in fact does not believe in a world-soul. How are we to understand Philo's argument in this context? One knows that he speaks sometimes of man as a micro-cosmos. Is this idea perhaps behind the present argument? Notwithstanding the fact that the relation between micro- and macro-cosmos is not one between part and whole, I am inclined to think that this relationship has led Philo to argue in the way he does here, thus making an argument which at first sight seems to be solid enough; but a closer view it appears to be a weak link in the

argumentation. b) The second question concerns Philo's thesis itself. Why does he endeavour to identify the world of ideas with the logos of God? The answer, I think, should be: because Philo tries to reduce as far as possible the multiplicity in his system. There is not a logos of God *and* the ideas within him, but these two are one and the same reality. One should bear in mind that Philo does not deal here with the relationship between God and his logos. Thus it is not his intention to stress the "fundamental unity of the divine", as Nikiprowetzky suggests in his admirable book, *Le commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, [216] p. 250, where he writes: "Ainsi, en dépit de la pseudo-multiplicité que les notions de Cause première, de monde intellectuelle et de Logos y instaurent, l'unité fondamentale du divin est finalement sauvegardée". In my view the unity concerns the noetic cosmos and the logos only, not the 'First cause'. In *Opif.* 16 Philo stated that God, before making the sense-perceptible world, *created first* (προεξετύπου) the noetic cosmos. If the noetic cosmos was created and logos and noetic cosmos coincide in some respect, the logos was created too. Thus there is no fundamental unity in the divine reality. Indeed, Philo does have in view a fundamental unity, but only that between ideas and logos. This is for him a considerable step in the direction of making his system more simple, an ideal which every philosopher strives for.

*ad 2.* Two textual problems are still to be dealt with.

a) The subordinate clause, which in the critical edition is a conditional one: εἰ μείζων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐστίν. This reading stems from the indirect tradition of this Philonic text in Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* XI 24. The whole direct tradition has a relative clause: the pronoun may be masculine (ὃς μείζων) feminine (ἥ μείζων) or neuter (ὃ μείζον).

If the reconstruction of Philo's argument given above is correct, an εἰ-clause is almost impossible here. It inserts a condition which is not included in Moses' statement and in so doing weakens the force of the argument. Thus from a logical point of view the insertion of another εἰ-clause would be unbearable. On the other hand, the emergence of such an εἰ-clause became less offensive as soon as the reading εἶδος instead of εἰ δ' ὁ had obscured Philo's way of arguing.

Thus one has to assume that the text originally had a relative pronoun. But which one? The masculine ὃς refers to κόσμος; the

feminine ἥ anticipates the feminine substantive supposed in τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης, viz., εἰκὼν; the neuter ὅ anticipates μίμημα. But there are two arguments in support of the feminine: (1) the most important manuscript (V) has this reading; (2) the reading εἰ of the indirect tradition is easier to explain if the original had ἥ than if it had ὅς or ὅ (iotacism).

b) The seclusion of τὸ παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν. Here the German editors were followed by Colson in the Loeb series and Arnaldez in the Lyon edition. But is it necessary? It is evident that the words αὐτὸς ἃν εἴη ὁ θεοῦ λόγος are an excellent conclusion of the whole argument: "The archetypal seal (= the noetic cosmos) is the logos of God himself". Moreover αὐτὸς ἃν εἴη followed by τὸ παράδειγμα seems to be awkward Greek. [217]

Nevertheless all manuscripts have a couple of expressions here which are qualifications of the divine logos and which one finds in many places elsewhere throughout Philo's oeuvre. Is it not possible to maintain these striking qualifications here?

One should bear in mind that 1. in *Opif.* 24–5 Philo is demonstrating the coincidence of the noetic world and the logos *himself*, and 2. that the logos is permanently present in the course of the argumentation (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ, εἰκὼν εἰκόνοσ, μίμημα θείας εἰκόνοσ).

When Philo then at the end of the argument has written the words αὐτὸς ἃν εἴη, the reader already understands what he intends to say: "the noetic world is *he himself* (sc. the logos)". But instead of mentioning immediately the name of the logos, Philo introduces an element of tension to his statement by summing up first some epithets of the logos. One could indicate this by printing a little stroke after αὐτὸς ἃν εἴη.

One final remark on these epithets: the reading given above is that of the manuscript V and of Eusebius; all other manuscripts have τὸ ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα, ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν. Philo speaks many times of the logos as ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα (*Opif.* 70; *Poster.* 105; *Congr.* 8; *Somn.* I 126; *Spec.* I 279, 327; *Virt.* 70; *Aet.* 15) and several times as ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα (*Ebr.* 133; *Mutat.* 135, 146; *Leg.* I 22; *Her.* 280). but ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν seems to me hardly acceptable, because the formula ἰδέα (τῶν) ἰδεῶν, just like τὰ ἁγία τῶν ἁγίων or ᾧσμα ᾧσμάτων, does not admit any further qualification of greatness. It indicates already in itself the highest degree. In *Migr.* 103 Philo, explaining the σφραγίς of Ex. 28, 22, says: 'Ἄλλ' ἐκείνη

μὲν ἡ σφραγὶς ἰδέα ἐστὶν ἰδεῶν, καθ' ἣν ὁ θεὸς ἐτύπωσε τὸν κόσμον.  
The *logos* is ἰδέα ἰδεῶν, the highest idea, the ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα.  
'Αρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν is in fact a conflation of these two  
expressions. In this case I would prefer to follow the other  
manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I am sincerely thankful to Mr. D.T. Runia (Kampen, Netherlands) for reading this article and making several useful observations as well as for correcting the English of this article. I am also indebted to Professor V. Nikiprowetzky (Paris), who kindly read the manuscript of this article and wrote me a letter with several helpful suggestions.

**PART FOUR**  
**PLOTINIANA**



## A CRUCIAL PASSAGE IN PLOTINUS

*Enn. VI 9,7*

In this chapter Plotinus discusses the question how one becomes aware of the highest principle. He starts from our daily experience: we cannot hold an object in mind, if our mind is occupied by another. Then he makes a comparison with matter; ὅλη ἀποιός ἐστίν is the general theory. As matter, he says, must be without quality in order to be able to receive the impression of all things, so the soul must be empty in order to be filled up and enlightened by the One; δεῖ ἀνείδεον τὴν ψυχὴν γίνεσθαι. Plotinus continues: εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, πάντων τῶν ἔξω ἀφεμένην δεῖ ἐπιστραφῆναι πρὸς τὸ εἶσω πάντα, μὴ πρὸς τι τῶν ἔξω κεκλίσθαι, ἀλλὰ ἀγνοήσαντα τὰ πάντα καὶ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν τῇ διαθέσει, τότε δὲ καὶ τοῖς εἶδεσιν, ἀγνοήσαντα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ θεᾷ ἐκείνου γενέσθαι, κακείνῳ συγγενόμενον καὶ ἱκανῶς οἶον ὁμιλήσαντα ἢ κειν ἀγγέλλοντα, εἰ δύναιτο, καὶ ἄλλῃ τὴν ἐκεῖ συνουσίαν· οἷον ἴσως καὶ Μίνως ποιούμενος ὁαριστῆς τοῦ Διὸς ἐφημίσθη εἶναι, ἧς μεμνημένος εἶδωλα αὐτῆς τοὺς νόμους ἐτίθει τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπαφῇ εἰς νόμων πληρούμενος θέσιν: 'only after having voided the mind of all things can one have contemplation of the One. Having had communion with this highest reality, one must come back and, if one is able, communicate it to others. Thus Minos did, as it seems, giving laws under the influence of his communion with the One'. Then the Mss. read: ἢ καὶ τὰ πολιτικὰ οὐκ ἄξια αὐτοῦ νομίσασα εἰ ἐθέλει μένειν ἄνω. That the feminine participle is here out of place goes without saying. Already in the Mss. A and F one reads *in margine* νομίσαντα. In this way the text is smoothed. This variant was accepted by several authors, as Ficinus, Kirchhoff, Bréhier. But Harder (*Plotins Schriften*, Hamburg, 1956, Bnd. Ia, p. 192; cp. Bnd. Ib, p. 480) put the words νομίσαντα εἰ ἐθέλει *inter cruces*; he thinks that εἰ ἐθέλει does not agree with the ordinary teaching of Plotinus. Μένειν ἄνω is not a question of willing, but of being apt.

These difficulties can be avoided without changing a letter of the Mss. Instead of νομίσασα εἰ one should read νομίσας ἀεί. One has to accept only that after the excursus about Minos Plotinus begins a new sentence, and says: 'or believing that τὰ πολιτικὰ are not worthy of him, he wishes to remain always in these higher

regions'. Τὰ πολιτικά can be translated as 'politics', referring to the activity of Minos, or in a larger sense as 'the activities of a citizen'. So I propose to read: ἢ καὶ τὰ πολιτικά οὐκ ἄξια αὐτοῦ νομίσας ἀεὶ ἐθέλει μένειν ἄνω. 'And this will happen to him who has seen much'.

Plotinus' discussion of time, which fills the second part (par. 7–13) of *Enneads* III 7, consists of two parts, *viz.*, a description and refutation of the δόξαι of other philosophers, especially Aristotle and the Stoics (par. 7–10), and an explanation of his own view (par. 11–13). At the end of the second part Plotinus once more turns his attention to an opinion not his own. The text given by the MSS. runs as follows: Εἰ δέ τις ἐν οὐχ ὑποστάσει ἢ ἐν οὐχ ὑπάρξει τὸν χρόνον λέγοι, δηλονότι ψεύδεσθαι καὶ τὸ θεὸν αὐτόν, ὅταν λέγῃ <ἦν> καὶ <ἔσται>· οὕτω γὰρ ἔσται καὶ ἦν, ὡς τὸ ἐν ᾧ λέγει αὐτὸν ἔσεσθαι. Ἄλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς τοιούτους ἄλλος τρόπος λόγων. Obviously there is something wrong in the sentence between δηλονότι and θεὸν αὐτόν. This part of the sentence gives rise to the following observations: 1. a verb is lacking. This is why Kirchhoff, followed by Müller, Volkmann and Bréhier, has proposed to read ψεύσεται instead of ψεύδεσθαι; the same editors read τὸν (θεόν) instead of τό, which is supported by some MSS. Henry and Schwyzer, however, did not accept this conjecture and put a crux after ψεύδεσθαι. — 2. the τό before θεόν is strange. — 3. one does not expect a θεός in this context.

These problems are solved, if one reads θετέον instead of τὸ θεόν. The meaning of the text is then as follows: “If somebody says that time is in non-existence and non-reality, one must clearly assume that he also does not speak the truth, when he speaks of ‘was’ and ‘will be’. For it will be and was in the same manner as that in which, according to his saying, it will be (and was)”. In other words: “If somebody says that time is in non-existence, *i.e.*, does not really exist, he cannot speak of ‘was’ and ‘will be’ with regard to it either; for ‘was’ then also means ‘was in non-existence’, *i.e.*, did not really exist; and the same holds good in the case of ‘will be’”. After drawing attention to this consequence Plotinus says that against people of that kind there is another way of reasoning, which, however, he does not show.

For a better understanding of the passage it may be observed that ἐν ὑποστάσει is often used in contrast with τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ or τῷ λόγῳ. Cf. for instance, Simplicius *In Arist. Categ.* p. 11, 11s. Diels: οὐ γὰρ καθὸ ἐν ὑποστάσει ἐστὶ τὰ πράγματα δηλοῦνται ὑπὸ τῆς κατηγορίας, ἀλλὰ

καθὸ ἐπινοεῖται ἤτοι ὄντα ἢ ὡς μὴ ὄντα. Philoponus *In Phys.*, p. 215, 9ss. Vitelli: τοῦτο τὸ εἶδος, φησὶν, ὅπερ φαμέν φύσιν εἶναι, οὐ φαμεν χωριστὸν τῇ ὑποστάσει, ἀλλὰ μόνον τῷ ὀριστικῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ. *Ibid.* p. 398, 23ss. καὶ τῇ ὑποστάσει δὲ ἐν τὸ τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ τῷ γε λόγῳ ἄλλο μὲν ἐστὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ... ἄλλο δὲ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ δύναμις. In the same direction points already Ps.-Aristotle *Περὶ κόσμου* 395 a 20s. τῶν ἐν ἀέρι φαντασμάτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ κατ' ἔμφασιν τὰ δὲ καθ' ὑπόστασιν. On account of these parallels, it seems to be probable that, in writing ἐν οὐχ ὑποστάσει, Plotinus is opposing the view that time is only a product of thinking and does not exist in reality. This supposition is, in my opinion, strongly supported by the fact that, in this same treatise, at the end of his refutation of the views of other authors (9,78–80) Plotinus treats of a similar opinion in a similar way: Διὰ τί δὲ οὐκ ἔσται (*sc.* ὁ χρόνος) πρὶν καὶ ψυχὴν τὴν μετροῦσαν εἶναι. Εἰ μὴ τις τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοῦ παρὰ ψυχῆς λέγοι γίνεσθαι "... Unless one should say that the origin of time is in a (measuring) soul." Just as in the passage of par. 13, this observation does not receive a further discussion.[164]

If this remark concerning parallelism is correct, it seems also possible to indicate the origin of the passage under discussion. As was already detected by Bréhier in his edition of the *Enneads* (III, p. 141, n. 1), the observation of par. 9 concerned here seems to have been suggested by an objection raised by Aristotle himself against his own theory, *viz.* the question put in *Phys.* IV 219a27, whether time would exist, if there was no soul. This question must be the origin of Plotinus' observation at the end both of par. 9 and par. 13. The imaginary character of this question readily explains the remarkable fact that in both cases Plotinus feels no need for a refutation.

From the palaeographical point of view the conjecture proposed here seems to be easily understandable. An objection could be made against the place of καί but one should not forget that καί belongs to ψεύδεσθαι as well as to θετέον. Finally, the conjecture seems to be confirmed by *Enn.* IV 2.1.41 διὸ δὴ μεριστὸν πάντη καὶ τοῦτο θετέον.

## DAS EKEI IN PLOTIN ENN. VI 9,7,4

Im 36. Jahrgang (1979) dieser Zeitschrift (S. 90–100) wurden von Professor Mario Puelma sieben interessante «Vorschläge zu Plotin VI 9» gemacht. In Enn. VI 9,7,4 schlägt er vor, das ἐκεῖ der Handschriften in αἰί zu ändern. Er folgt hier der Anregung von Harder. Meines Erachtens ist jedoch die Lesart der Handschriften zu halten. Der Text von Enn. VI 9,7, 1–5 lautet: Εἰ δ' ὅτι μηδὲν τούτων ἐστίν, ἀοριστεῖς τῇ γνώμῃ, στήσονσαν τὸν εἰς ταῦτα, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων θεῶ· θεῶ δὲ μὴ ἔξω ρίπτων τὴν διάνοιαν. Οὐ γὰρ κεῖται που ἐρημῶσαν αὐτοῦ τὰ ἄλλα, ἀλλ' ἔστι τῷ δυναμένῳ θιγεῖν ἐκεῖ παρόν, τῷ δ' ἀδυνατοῦντι οὐ πάρεστιν. Puelmas Überlegungen für die Änderung von ἐκεῖ in αἰί sind folgende: eine Ortsbestimmung zu παρόν ist überflüssig, geradezu störend; ἐκεῖ von θιγεῖν abhängig zu machen ist auch keine gute Lösung. Hingegen erwartet man zu der durch Sperrung besonders hervorgehobenen periphrastischen Konstruktion ἔστιν ... παρόν eine modale Präzisierung. Dies könnte sehr gut das von Harder in Erwägung gezogene αἰί sein.—Wie dann statt des so geläufigen αἰί eine *lectio multo difficilior* in den Text hinein gekommen ist, erklärt Puelma nicht.

Mein erster Gedanke war, ob ἐκεῖ παρόν vielleicht absichtlich von Plotin gebraucht wurde, um anzudeuten, dass das Eine immer zugleich anwesend (παρόν) und entfernt (ἐκεῖ) ist. Nähere Betrachtung lehrte jedoch, dass dieser Gedanke nicht in den Zusammenhang passt.

Es gibt nämlich eine Möglichkeit, diesen Satz so zu verstehen, dass das ἐκεῖ nicht nur nicht überflüssig, sondern sogar von wesentlicher Bedeutung ist. Professor J.H. Waszink hat mir diesen Weg gezeigt mit dem Vorschlag, die Ortsbestimmung nicht auf das Objekt des Schauens, das Eine, sondern auf das Subjekt, den Schauenden, zu beziehen.

Um den in Frage stehenden Satz zu interpretieren, muss man den weiteren Zusammenhang in Betracht ziehen. Deswegen habe ich auch den ersten Satz von Enn. VI 9,7 zitiert.[62]

In den vorhergehenden Kapiteln hat Plotin auseinandergesetzt, was das Eine *nicht* ist. Diese Erörterung findet ihren Höhepunkt in der Behauptung am Ende des 6. Kapitels: «Man darf Es sogar nicht das Gute nennen.»

Jeder, der die Auseinandersetzung Plotins angehört und gedanklich mitvollzogen hat, wird bei dieser Aussage von Ratlosigkeit erfüllt sein und seufzen: «Wo sollen wir Es denn suchen?» Plotin ist sich dessen bewusst und gibt folgenden Rat (ich paraphasiere); «Wenn du aber deswegen, weil es nichts von den Dingen [mit dem Terminus «die Dinge» werden die ὄντα angedeutet, in denen das Eine sich nicht finden liess; ich folge darin Harder] ist, mit deinem Denken in Verlegenheit gerätst, so nimm deinen Standort in diesen Dingen und schau von da aus. [Plotin sagt also, dass man, obwohl das Eine mit keinem von den Dingen zu identifizieren ist, dennoch mit dem Denken in den Dingen anfangen soll. Und er fährt fort:] Und beim Schauen sollst du dein Denken nicht nach aussen gehen lassen <als ob das Eine sich irgendwo draussen befände>; denn Es befindet sich nicht irgendwo derartig, dass Es die übrigen Dinge seiner beraubt sein lässt. [M.a.W. Es ist nicht von den Dingen entfernt.] Nein: Für den, der die Fähigkeit besitzt, ist es *dort* [das heisst, *dort wo der Schauende sich mit dem Denken befindet*] gegenwärtig; wer die Fähigkeit nicht besitzt, für den ist Es nicht gegenwärtig.»

Das ἐκεῖ entspricht also dem μὴ ἔξω im vorhergehenden Satz. Man soll, mit dem Denken, in den Dingen bleiben, nicht aus ihnen heraustreten, als ob das Eine irgendwo sonst zu finden wäre. Nein, sagt Plotin, bleibe, wo du (mit dem Denken) bist, nämlich in den Dingen. *Dort* ist das Eine gegenwärtig, *dort* wirst du das Eine schauen, falls du die Fähigkeit dazu hast. Davon hängt es ab.

Ich glaube, dass den Interpreten, die sich bis jetzt ausdrücklich mit diesem Text befasst haben, ein grundlegender Gedanke Plotins entgangen ist.

**PART FIVE**

**ESSAYS ON THE RELATION  
BETWEEN GREEK AND PATRISTIC THOUGHT**



## THE ORIGIN OF FALSEHOOD

### Some Comments on the Introductory Passage of the Treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead* Attributed to Athenagoras

The author, whose identity may be left undiscussed here,<sup>1</sup> begins his treatment of the problem of the resurrection with a speculation on the origin of falsehood. The text runs as follows:

Παντὶ δόγματι καὶ λόγῳ τῆς ἐν τούτοις ἀληθείας ἔχομένῳ παρα-  
φύεται τι ψεῦδος· παραφύεται δὲ οὐκ ἐξ ὑποκειμένης τινὸς ἀρχῆς κατὰ  
φύσιν ὁρμώμενον ἢ τῆς κατ' αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἕκαστον αἰτίας, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ  
τῶν τὴν ἔκθεσμον σπορὰν ἐπὶ διαφθορᾷ τῆς ἀληθείας τετιμηκότων  
σπουδαζόμενον. 2. τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν εὐρεῖν πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τῶν πάσαι ταῖς  
περὶ τούτων φροντίσιν ἐσχολακότων καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων πρὸς τε τοὺς  
ἑαυτῶν πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τοὺς ὁμοχρόνους γενομένης διαφορᾶς, οὐχ  
ἥκιστα δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς τῶν ἐν μέσῳ στρεφομένων ταραχῆς. οὐδὲν γὰρ  
τῶν ἀληθῶν οἱ τοιοῦτοι κατέλιπον ἀσυκοφάντητον, οὐ τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ  
θεοῦ, οὐ τὴν γνῶσιν, οὐ τὴν ἐνέργειαν, οὐ τὰ τούτοις ἐφεξῆς καθ' εἰρμὸν  
ἐπόμενα καὶ τὸν τῆς εὐσεβείας ἡμῖν ὑπογράφοντα λόγον· ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν  
πάντῃ καὶ καθάπαξ ἀπογινώσκουσιν τὴν περὶ τούτων ἀλήθειαν, οἱ δὲ  
πρὸς τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς διαστρέφουσιν, οἱ δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐμφανῶν  
ἀπορεῖν ἐπιτηδεύουσιν (c. 1,1–2).

The structure of this introductory speculation is clear enough. The author asserts that *some falsehood* grows up alongside every true doctrine. He then indicates the *source* of this growth and shows how the history of human thinking *illustrates* this theory.

The way, however, in which the author elaborates his ideas deserves some closer examination. Only then one detects the background of thinking which lies behind this, at first sight, rather common speculation.

In the opening sentence the words τῆς ἐν τούτοις ἀληθείας ἔχομένῳ ,[304] draw the attention of the reader. The author speaks of every doctrine or word (argument) “that sticks to the truth therein”. Is this just a somewhat affected expression for “every true doctrine”? One should, however, realize that the formula “a doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> See R.M. Grant, ‘Athenagoras or Pseudo-Athenagoras’, *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954) 121–9.

sticking to the truth" evokes a special idea of 'the truth'. Here truth is not the accordance between reality and verbal expression, but it indicates 'the true reality'. A true doctrine is a doctrine that sticks to that reality.

But, one may ask, how then can we explain ἐν τούτοις? This pronoun must refer to δόγματι καὶ λόγῳ, i.e. to the verbal expression of the truth. This difficulty has been solved by some authors through an emendation of the text; they read ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν. There is, however, no need for any emendation. Every doctrine that sticks to the truth, sticks only to a part of the truth, namely to the part *expressed in that doctrine*, and this is exactly what ἐν τούτοις means.

Παραψύεται τι ψεῦδος—Falsehood grows alongside (παρὰ-) every true doctrine. The image here is that of the weed growing in a field, and growing there unduly.

Παραψύεται δὲ οὐκ ... —Of course the question arises where the weed comes from. The author gives first a negative answer, which is not easy to understand. Literally he says: "it does not grow naturally (κατὰ φύσιν ὁρμώμενον) from an underlying source nor from the (τῆς) cause that is in the essence of everything"; and then he adds "but it is the result of the endeavour (σπουδαζόμενον) of those who have valued the sowing of spurious seed to destroy the truth". This positive answer reminds one of Mt. 13,24ff., esp. 27–28 "Lord, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where does the weed then come from? He answered: an enemy has done this."

But how can we understand the negative answer? This becomes clear, if one elaborates the image used by the author. One may ask: what place has the truth in this image? The answer is: truth is the field itself with the good seed in it. This field, this seed do not bring forth falsehood, but only true doctrines, true words. Now one understands the negative answer: 'falsehood does not originate from *some underlying source* (in other words, there is no *seed* in the field that makes it grow naturally), nor is there anything *in the essence of everything* (i.e., in the ground itself) that causes falsehood.'

The Codex Parisinus Gr. 451 (written in 914) presents in the margin of the text a resumé of the successive chapters by Arethas. That of the present paragraph runs as follows:[305] "Ὅτι παντὶ δόγματι καὶ λόγῳ ἀληθείας ἐχομένῳ παρυσίσταται τι ψεῦδος, οὐκ ἐκ φυσικῆς αἰτίας ὁρμώμενον, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀθέσμου τῆς ἀληθείας διαφθορᾶς

τῶν τὸ ψεῦδος τετιμηκότων ἐκ κακοσχόλων καὶ συκοφαντεῖν ἅπαν ἀγαθὸν καὶ θεῖον ἐσπουδακότων.<sup>2</sup>

Arethas expresses the theory without making use of the image of the field and the weed. Falsehood does not originate "from any physical cause", he says, but from the lawless deeds of those who intend to destroy the truth.

This explanation of falsehood reminds one of the famous theory concerning the origin of *evil*, according to which evil has no real existence because it does not originate from a physical cause but from the will of the wrong-doer.

τοῦτο δ' ἔστιν εὐρεῖν ... —This paragraph serves to illustrate the author's thesis concerning the origin of falsehood. He says: "This may be gathered first from those who long ago concerned themselves with reflections on these matters and the discord which arose between them and their predecessors and contemporaries, but also and by no means least of all, from the confusion which characterizes the discussion of matters currently debated" (tr. Schoedel<sup>3</sup>). One wonders *how* this διαφορά or ταραχή is an argument in favour of the author's thesis. This must become clear from what follows: "For such men have left no truth free from misrepresentation." However, even after this explanation one might ask: where does the force of this argument lie? It says that "such men" behaved like συκόφανται towards every truth. This argument only holds if that 'truth' is a given reality, which can be 'mishandled'.

Thinking over the argument of the author we have found here indeed the idea which is behind it, namely the conviction that "the truth" was given to man at the beginning. One finds the same idea in an early Christian author, almost contemporary with the supposed writer of the present treatise, *viz.*, in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. He speaks of the only true philosophy, sent down to men in early times, of which the different philosophic schools are aberrations (*Dial.* 2,1).<sup>4</sup> This philosophy, which is 'the truth', was sent to Moses and the prophets. And Christianity, being the fulfilment of the prophecies, is now the only true philosophy.

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<sup>2</sup> O. von Gebhardt, *Der Arethascodex Paris*. Gr. 451, T.U. I,3 (Leipzig 1883) 186.

<sup>3</sup> Athenagoras, *Legatio and De Resurrectione*, edited and translated by W.R. Schoedel, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my *An Early Christian Philosopher. Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters one to nine* (Leiden 1971).

Only against the background of this basic idea the argument under discussion is valid. It says: "Such men have left no truth free from misrepresentation, not the nature of God, not his knowledge, not his activity, nor all that logically flows from these and traces the outlines of our religious teaching" (cf. tr. Schoedel). The last observation<sup>5</sup> points out that, according to the author, the outlines of Christian doctrine have already been sketched by the truth as it was given in the beginning (cf. the theory of Justin mentioned above).

Finally, the author describes the different attitudes of those who do not accept that truth. "Some of them simply reject it,<sup>6</sup> others distort it after the model of their own thinking, others exercise themselves in doubting even what is obvious." Thus some falsehood grows up alongside every true doctrine, as the initial sentence said.

The above observations may show again how commentaries on the early Christian writers are badly needed. Only a commentary supplies the ingredient for a clear understanding and an exact rendering.

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<sup>5</sup> Schoedel translates "and *follows the lines* of our religious teaching", which seems to be incorrect.

<sup>6</sup> Schoedel: "Some of them simply despair of knowing the truth concerning these things." This is rather the attitude of the third group.

## LE CHRISTIANISME ET LA PHILOSOPHIE

A peu près au milieu du deuxième siècle il y a un développement très important dans la littérature chrétienne. Jusqu'alors les oeuvres des auteurs chrétiens s'étaient adressées à leurs coreligionnaires. Ils adhéraient à la tradition qui avait ses origines dans les Apôtres et le caractère de leurs oeuvres s'accordait en large partie avec les écrits, en particulier avec les épîtres, du Nouveau Testament. Aussi désigne-t-on ces auteurs du nom de «Pères Apostoliques». Cependant au milieu du deuxième siècle ce caractère se modifie. On s'adresse au monde, aux intellectuels de l'époque. A just titre O. Gigon a appelé l'attention sur le fait que par suite de ce développement le christianisme se distingue des autres courants religieux qui se présentaient dans le monde gréco-romain d'alors.<sup>1</sup>

On comprend que ce «virement» prit le sens d'une confrontation avec le mode de pensée de l'époque, donc surtout avec la philosophie grecque. On peut se faire des opinions différentes à propos de cette rencontre, mais personne ne pourra nier qu'il s'agit d'un événement des plus importants dans l'histoire de notre monde occidental.

Longtemps les oeuvres chrétiennes où cette rencontre trouve surtout son expression, ont attiré insuffisamment l'attention de la part des philologues; notamment dans le domaine sur lequel les philologues allemands du dix-neuvième siècle exerçaient leur influence. Cependant un changement notable s'est produit à ce sujet, témoin les publications nombreuses parues ces derniers temps sur les rapport entre la culture antique classique et le christianisme.<sup>2</sup> Ces livres nous démontrent à quel point les acquisitions de la

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<sup>1</sup> *Die antike Kultur und das Christentum*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> O. Gigon, *Die antike Kultur und das Christentum*, Gütersloh, 1966. A.D. Nock, *Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Background*, New York, 1964. A. Wifstrand *Die alte Kirche und die griechische Bildung* (Dalp Taschenbücher), Bern-München, 1967 (6 conférences faites en 1951 à Uppsala, parues en suédois en 1957, traduction française en 1962). W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1961 (traduction allemande en 1963). H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, Oxford 1966. E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, Cambridge, 1965. J. Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique*, Tournai, 1961. J. Pépin, *Théologie cosmique et théologie des chrétiens*, Paris 1964. Mentionnons pour finir l'activité de F.-J. Dölger, continuée dans le *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*.

pensée grecque ont influencé ceux qui se donnaient pour tâche de répandre le message de l'évangile à leurs contemporains. Parfois on prête aussi attention à l'influence de la pensée chrétienne sur la culture païenne.<sup>3</sup> Pour nous il ne s'agit pas tant ici de savoir comment les idées différentes de la pensée grecque ont influencé le christianisme, il ne s'agit pas tant du contenu de la pensée mais plutôt de la forme; non pas de ce qu'on pense, mais comment on pense. Il s'agit de la rencontre entre la philosophie grecque et la foi chrétienne.

Cet essai se compose de quatre parties. Tout d'abord nous porterons notre attention sur la pensée philosophique grecque telle qu'elle se manifestait au deuxième siècle. [206] Nous y constaterons la présence de deux courants, bien illustrés par les figures des philosophes Galien et Numénios. Après nous introduirons le premier philosophe chrétien Justin. Dans l'introduction de son «Dialogue avec le juif Tryphon» (vers 160) il prend nettement position contre la philosophie. Ensuite Celse va demander notre attention. Il écrit vers 180 un ouvrage intitulé *Ἀληθὴς λόγος* où il attaque violemment le christianisme. Il n'est pas impossible que son argumentation soit entre autres une réponse à l'ouvrage de Justin. A la fin nous allons discuter de quelle façon Origène répondra, soixante-dix ans plus tard, à l'attaque de Celse dans son *Κατὰ Κέλσου*.

### *I. Les deux courants dans la pensée philosophique grecque du deuxième siècle*

Le courant principal de la philosophie de l'époque est platonicien. On peut cependant, si je ne me trompe pas, y distinguer deux façons de penser, bien illustrées par deux penseurs de cette époque, Galien et Numénios. Qu'aucun des deux ne se dise Platonicien n'empêche en rien de les faire passer comme des représentants de la philosophie d'alors. Au contraire cela ne fait que montrer combien le courant platonicien était prédominant.

Galien était originaire de Pergamum (né en 129). Il a obtenu sa plus grande renommée comme médecin, mais il était en même temps un philosophe notable. Il passa la plus grande partie de sa vie

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<sup>3</sup> Voir le dernier chapitre dans le livre mentionné ci-dessus de A. Wifstrand.

à Rome où il mourut en 199. Il ne s'affilia à aucune école, ni dans le domaine de la médecine ni dans celui de la philosophie. Il se laissa mener seulement par la preuve (ἀπόδειξις). La conception de Galien se caractérise bien dans un passage où il dit, se fâchant contre ses collègues médecins et philosophes dont l'attitude fait preuve d'un manque de critique: »Il est plus facile de raconter quelque chose de nouveau aux juifs et aux chrétiens qu'aux médecins partisans d'une certaine école«. Ce qu'on voit ici est un conflit aigu entre πίστις et ἀπόδειξις. Galien prend le parti du dernier et voit toute πίστις comme un ennemi irréconciliable d'ἀπόδειξις. R. Walzer qui a édité et discuté les textes de Galien sur les Juifs et les Chrétiens<sup>4</sup> fait remarquer à ce propos: »On a à peine besoin d'appeler l'attention sur le fait que cette appréciation de la raison critique que nous trouvons dans Galien est tout à fait en accord avec les meilleures traditions les plus fondamentales de la philosophie grecque«.<sup>5</sup> J'aimerais ajouter cependant que cette haute appréciation de la raison critique pourrait acquérir facilement un caractère exclusif et il en fut ainsi dans la philosophie grecque quand celle-ci, et notamment le Platonisme, tomba dans le scepticisme. Chez Galien nous trouvons une forte prédominance de l'aspect rationaliste de la connaissance humaine et il y a chez lui des indices d'une tendance vers un scepticisme. Ce qui correspond seulement à cette façon de penser est une contradiction parfaite entre πίστις et ἀπόδειξις.

Il y avait cependant dans la pensée de Platon un autre aspect qui se manifeste dans ses mythes et dans la manière dont il parle des »anciens«.<sup>6</sup> Or cet aspect se fait jour chez un autre penseur de la même époque, Numénios d'Apamée. Ce savant universel est dans une tradition que j'aimerais dépeindre brièvement ainsi: quand le Platonisme, on pourrait même dire la pensée grecque tout court, s'est enlisée dans le scepticisme, signe évident d'un esprit fatigué, nous voyons se montrer à l'époque de l'hellénisme, un intérêt [207] pour d'autres cultures, pour les idées d'autres peuples. On pourrait comparer cet intérêt avec celui de notre époque pour l'art des

<sup>4</sup> *Galen on Jews and Christians*, London 1949. On trouve le texte précité à la page 9.

<sup>5</sup> *O.c.*, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> P. ex. *Phèdre* 235b7; 244b6 ff. 274c1 ff. *Philèbe* 16c5 ff.; *Lois* 886 b 10, 890 d 4. Il faut même dire, que le scepticisme est au fond une attitude totalement contraire à celle de Platon, qui avait une appréciation tellement haute de l'intelligence humaine.

primitifs. On trouve cette tendance tout d'abord dans la philosophie de l'hellénisme, le Stoïcisme, et notamment chez cet autre philosophe universel, Posidonius, lui aussi originaire d'Apamée.

Selon ces penseurs les premiers hommes ont été en possession d'une grande sagesse, puisqu'ils se trouvaient encore près des dieux—*a dis recentes*, comme dit Sénèque.<sup>7</sup> Cette connaissance a le caractère d'une sorte de révélation primitive. A ce sujet on pouvait facilement s'autoriser de Platon, comme nous avons dit déjà ci-dessus et bien de *Philèbe* 16 C 5, où il parle des «anciens» qui ont été meilleurs que nous, demeurant plus près des dieux et qui ont communiqué une certaine connaissance, don des Dieux aux hommes, à ceux qui sont venus après eux.

Comment trouver, suivant Numénios, la vérité? Ce philosophe, qui se dit Pythagoricien, déclare à ce propos: il faudra d'abord considérer les témoignages de Platon et alors «retourner» à Pythagore et s'adresser aux peuples connus, mettre à profit leurs mystères, leur doctrine et leurs institutions, comme les Brahmanes, les Juifs, les Mages et les Egyptiens les avaient, en tant que ceux-ci—ainsi Numénios—s'accordent avec la doctrine de Platon.<sup>8</sup> Ce texte renferme plusieurs données intéressantes sur lesquelles H. Ch. Puech a écrit un article important en 1934.<sup>9</sup> Ce qui nous intéresse surtout pour le moment est le term «retourner» (ἀναχωρήσασθαι) aux anciens peuples et aux anciens sages. Cela ne peut avoir de sens qu'en admettant que ces anciens peuples aient possédé la vérité et cela suppose de nouveau une connaissance ou une révélation primitive. Par son appréciation des «anciens» Numénios se range nettement du côté de la tradition qui a eu son premier représentant en Posidonius. C'est en partant de cette notion qu'il faut entendre l'expression curieuse de Numénios que Platon a été un «Moïse atticisant»,<sup>10</sup> puisque dans le texte précité les Juifs ont été mentionnés parmi les anciens peuples.<sup>11</sup>

Comme on voit il y a dans la philosophie grecque du deuxième siècle, à côté de l'attitude fort rationaliste de Galien, une autre

<sup>7</sup> *Ep.* 90, 44.

<sup>8</sup> *Fr.* 9a (Leemans).

<sup>9</sup> *Mélanges Bidez*, Bruxelles, 1934, p. 745-78.

<sup>10</sup> Clemens Alex. *Strom.* I 22 (= Euseb., *Praep. Ev.* IX, 6).

<sup>11</sup> Numenius ne doit pas avoir trouvé cette appréciation des Juifs dans Posidonius, s'il est vrai, que Posidonius a fait preuve d'une attitude antisémite, ce que Puech affirme. Voir aussi à propos de cette affirmation, l'opinion de Wifstrand (*O.c.* p. 92).

conception exprimant la foi à la puissance de la connaissance humaine telle qu'elle se révèle dans l'esprit primitif et innocent, conception dont on trouve les origines dans les oeuvres de Platon.

## II. *Point de vue de Justin à l'égard de la philosophie grecque*

Le premier philosophe chrétien qui prend position à l'égard de la philosophie est le martyr Justin. Chose remarquable, cela se fait dans un dialogue avec un Juif. Justin y raconte comment une personne montrant un intérêt particulier pour la philosophie, l'aborde pendant une promenade matinale. Quand cet inconnu se trouve être juif, Justin demande: «Que voulez-vous que la philosophie vous fasse? Moïse et les Prophètes ne vous suffisent pas?» A quoi Tryphon, le Juif, répond: «Comment? N'en est-il pas ainsi que dans la philosophie il s'agit de Dieu et que la tâche de la philosophie est la recherche du divin»<sup>12</sup> En d'autres termes: est-ce que la philosophie ne nous propose pas exactement ce que Moïse et les prophètes veulent nous enseigner? «Si,» dit Justin, «cette [208] conception est aussi la nôtre, mais chez la plupart des philosophes cela n'aboutit qu'à peu ou à rien», ce que Justin illustre au moyen de quelques exemples.<sup>13</sup> C'est alors que Tryphon pose la question importante: «mais quelle opinion sur la philosophie est alors la vôtre?» A quoi Justin répond: «La philosophie est vraiment ce que nous possédons de plus grand et de plus vénérable; elle seule nous mène à Dieu. Mais ce que la philosophie est au fond et la raison pour laquelle elle a été envoyée en bas aux hommes a échappé à la foule. Sinon il n'y aurait pas dans la philosophie ces tendances différentes comme les Platoniciens, les Stoïciens, les, Péripatéticiens etc. puisque cette science est une».<sup>14</sup> Il y a donc, selon Justin, une seule philosophie, envoyée en bas. A défaut de la juste notion on a perdu de vue cette philosophie si bien qu'il y a maintenant plusieurs systèmes.

Pour se faire une meilleure idée de l'intention de Justin, un autre passage du même *Dialogue*<sup>15</sup> est de grande importance. Là il dit que les adhérents des sectes différentes dans le christianisme (Marcionites, Valentiniens etc.) se disent bien tous chrétiens, mais ne le sont pas, comme c'est le cas des adhérents des différents

<sup>12</sup> *Dial.* 1,3.

<sup>13</sup> *Dial.* 1,4-5.

<sup>14</sup> *Dial.* 1,6-2,1.

<sup>15</sup> *Dial.* 35,5.

systèmes philosophiques: eux aussi se disent philosophes, mais ne le sont pas en réalité. Comme il n'y a qu'un christianisme pour Justin, il n'y a qu'une seule philosophie: une philosophie primitive pourrait-on dire, dont, comme il résulte de la suite de son argumentation, le christianisme est la continuation.

Justin dit de cette philosophie unique qu'elle a été envoyée en bas aux hommes.<sup>16</sup> Il est clair qu'on a affaire ici à cette «révélation» dont il était question chez Numénios et Posidonius. Aussi M.N. Hyldahl<sup>17</sup> a-t-il sans doute raison en disant que ces pensées de Justin doivent être considérées en rapport avec les conceptions de Posidonius.

Au cours de son exposé Justin, tout en portant son attention particulièrement sur le Platonisme, nous montre qu'on ne trouve cette vraie philosophie dans aucun des systèmes philosophiques grecs. Et puis la question qui suit: «Mais quel maître nous faudra-t-il suivre alors?» La réponse est: «Les prophètes. Ils sont plus anciens que les soi-disant philosophes et remplis d'un esprit divin qui leur permettait de prédire l'avenir. A présent leurs écrits sont toujours là et chacun pourra, en les lisant, y apprendre bien des choses sur les principes et la fin des affaires et sur tout ce qu'un philosophe doit savoir, à la condition qu'il ajoute foi à leurs paroles. Car ce n'est pas par *preuves* qu'ils ont parlé, puisqu'ils étaient des témoins dignes de *foi* de la vérité, au-dessus de toute démonstration».<sup>18</sup> On peut écouter dans ces dernières paroles une réaction de Justin à l'exigence de «preuves» de la part de Galien. Et un peu plus loin Justin dit qu'il va démontrer qu'il n'a ajouté foi ni à des fables vaines (κενοῖς μύθοις) ni à des doctrines gratuites (ἀναποδείκτοις λόγοις), mais aux principes remplis de l'Esprit de Dieu, abondants en grâce et qui frémissent de puissance.<sup>19</sup>

Mais nous n'avons pas besoin de nous arrêter plus longtemps aux arguments de Justin, parce qu'ils vont se présenter tout à l'heure d'une façon plus énergique dans Origène. Contentons-nous de faire remarquer que Justin ne veut pas passer sous silence l'exigence d'ἀπόδειξις.[209]

<sup>16</sup> Dans le texte du *Philèbe* de Platon, discuté ci-dessus on lit: ποθὲν ἐκ θεῶν ἐρρίφη.

<sup>17</sup> *Philosophie und Christentum. Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justinus*. Copenhague, 1966, p. 144ss.

<sup>18</sup> *Dial.* 7, 1-2.

<sup>19</sup> *Dial.* 9,1.

III. *L'attaque de Celse contre le christianisme*

Environ vingt années après que Justin eut écrit son *Dialogue*, Celse attaqua violemment le christianisme. Il donna à son ouvrage le titre de Ἀληθὴς λόγος. On a beaucoup discuté le sens de ce titre, mais A. Wifstrand a démontré d'une manière convaincante, à notre avis, qu'ici le term λόγος a sens de »doctrine«. <sup>20</sup> Quelle est à vrai dire cette »véritable doctrine« que Celse a en vue? C'est l'»ancienne doctrine« (ἀρχαῖος λόγος) dont il dit: »Il y a eu dès l'origine (ἄνωθεν) une doctrine d'une haute antiquité que les peuples les plus sages et les villes et les hommes sages ont connue«. <sup>21</sup> On entend ici un thème connu. C'est encore cette connaissance primitive dont il s'agit.

Or Moïse, c'est ainsi que Celse continue, <sup>22</sup> s'est approprié cette ancienne doctrine et c'est de cette façon qu'il est devenu un homme de renom. Moïse cependant a corrompu cette doctrine. Et qu'est-ce que c'est que le christianisme? Une corruption de la doctrine juive, c'est à dire, une corruption d'une corruption.

On serait tenté de voir dans cette théorie une réaction à la théorie de Justin d'après laquelle le christianisme serait la philosophie primitive retrouvée, comme Hyldahl l'a formulé. <sup>23</sup> Celse se serait servi ici de la même idée fondamentale—chez lui cette philosophie primitive s'appelle ἀρχαῖος λόγος—mais avec le résultat d'aboutir à une conclusion diamétralement opposée. <sup>24</sup>

En s'efforçant d'approfondir la théorie de Celse sur »l'ancienne doctrine«, on est amené forcément à se poser la question suivant:

<sup>20</sup> *Die wahre Lehre des Kelsos*, Bulletin de la société royale des lettres de Lund, 1941-2, p. 396.

<sup>21</sup> *Contre Celse* I 14.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* I 21.

<sup>23</sup> *O.C.*, p. 233 ss.

<sup>24</sup> C. Andresen (*Logos und Nomos. Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum*, Berlin, 1955) soutient également la thèse que Celse réagit aux écrits de Justin. Selon lui cependant Celse aurait emprunté à Justin l'idée de ce qu'il appelle une »Geschichtsphilosophie« ou »Geschichtsdenken« qui se serait présentée pour la première fois chez Justin, le chrétien Justin, et Celse aurait pris ce schéma tout en y donnant un autre contenu. Plusieurs critiques (p.ex. J.H. Waszink, *Vigiliae Christianae* 12 (1958) p. 166 ss; H. Dörrie, *Gnomon* 29(1957) p. 185 ss) ont appelé l'attention à juste titre sur le fait qu'il n'est pas exact de parler ici d'une philosophie de l'histoire, mais qu'il faut parler plutôt d'une reconnaissance de la valeur de la tradition (Waszink) et qu'on ne doit pas cette idée à Justin, mais qu'elle trouve tout à fait sa place dans la philosophie de l'époque.

quelle place tient la pensée grecque dans cette théorie? Quel en est le rapport avec cette ancienne doctrine? On peut déduire la réponse à cette question de ce qu'Origène écrit dans *Κατὰ Κέλσον* I, 2. Celse, dit-il, affirme que la doctrine juive est d'origine une doctrine barbare. A ce propose Origène fait remarquer: »Dit par Celse, ce ne peut être un reproche au judaïsme, puisqu'il est d'avis que les barbares sont capables de découvrir des δόγματα, c'est à dire, de découvrir la vérité«, (ce qui est évident en vertu de ce qu'il vient d'écrire à propos de cette ancienne doctrine). »Cependant«, dit Origène, »Celse ajoute que les Grecs sont plus habiles à juger (κρῖναι), fonder (βεβαιώσασθαι), adapter à la pratique de la vertu (ἀσκησαι πρὸς ἀρετήν) les découvertes des barbares.« On pourrait dire d'une autre façon: ces peuples anciens et ces sages anciens étaient bien à même de découvrir la vérité, mais les Grecs seuls ont été capables de la fonder et de s'y adapter.

On a à faire ici avec une association intéressante des deux pensées fondamentales dans la philosophie d'alors: la doctrine des anciens et l'exigence d'une justification rationnelle qui, d'après Celse, est l'apport propre des Grecs.

Prenant comme point de départ ce dernier argument—l'argument Galien pourrait-on dire—Celse livre son dernier assaut contre les Chrétiens. Il s'en prend d'abord à [210] leur foi (πίστις) et dit qu'elle n'est pas justifiée rationnellement (ἄλογος). Voici à peu près l'essentiel de son attaque: »En adhérant à une doctrine il faut se laisser mener par la raison (λόγος); sinon on tombe dans toutes sortes de pratiques obscures et on se laisse duper par des gens pervers.<sup>25</sup> C'est ce que Celse voit arriver aux Chrétiens, car il y en a parmi eux (τινας), dit-il, qui ne veulent pas discuter leur foi et qui utilisent des formules comme: »n'examine rien, mais crois« ou »la foi te sauvera«. Il s'agit ici de Chrétiens qui envers l'exigence des philosophes grecs: »démontrez, ne croyez pas« posent le principe: »croyez, ne démontrez pas«.<sup>26</sup> Ils partagent la conception de leurs adversaires selon laquelle πίστις et ἀπόδειξις sont des ennemis jurés et irréconciliables, mais ils font le choix de l'autre parti, savoir celui de la foi. Il s'avérera qu'il y a encore une autre possibilité qu'on trouve dans la défense d'Origène.

Avant d'y passer cependant, il vaut mieux peut-être indiquer que cette attaque contre la »foi« des Chrétiens qui serait contraire au

<sup>25</sup> *Contre Celse* I 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

λόγος, va rester la grand attaque de la part des Grecs. Cela se montre d'une façon très évidente chez Porphyre, peut-être l'adversaire le plus important du christianisme aux premiers siècles. Ce philosophe qui appartient à la génération d'après Origène, a écrit *Contre les Chrétiens* où s'élève la grand plainte que les Chrétiens se laissent mener par ἄλογος πίστις et ἀνεξέταστος συγκατάθεσις, c'est-à-dire, une foi qui ne s'appuie pas sur la raison et un adhésion qui ne s'appuie pas sur l'examen. Les Chrétiens ne font que «croire», de là aussi le nom de «croyants». On se rend compte de l'accent de méprise dans ces paroles de Porphyre.<sup>27</sup>

Envers les Chrétiens qui se prononçaient pour des devises comme celles que Celse vient de mentionner, une pareille argumentation pouvait avoir l'air d'être solide. Cependant, comme nous l'avons dit, une autre forme de défense sortait du camp des Chrétiens et on la trouve chez Origène.

#### *La réponse d'Origène*

Dans son Κατὰ Κέλσου, paru à peu près vers 250, donc soixante-dix ans après la publication de l'ouvrage de Celse, Origène traite les accusations de ce dernier. Il commence par la thèse de Celse suivant laquelle la doctrine juive et par conséquent celle des Chrétiens, serait une corruption de la vraie doctrine ancienne et que Moïse aurait été le premier corrupteur, suivi en ceci par le Christ. Origène répond: De quel droit Celse exclue-t-il les Juifs des peuples anciens qui ont été en possession de la vraie doctrine? Il fait bien mention des Egyptiens, des Assyriens, des Indiens et de beaucoup d'autres peuples, mais il ne veut pas accorder aux Juifs les épithètes «anciens» et «sages». De quel droit? Pour quelle raison est-ce qu'il ajoute foi aux historiens des Egyptiens et des Indiens, mais pourquoi refuse-t-il d'avoir foi en ceux des Juifs? Voilà ce qui s'appelle avoir deux poids et deux mesures. Il est évident que Celse est plein de préjugés.<sup>28</sup> Combien plus judicieux alors Numénios qui jugeait les Juifs d'une façon plus favorable<sup>29</sup> (nous avons vu déjà ci-dessus que Numénios rangeait les Juifs parmi les peuples

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<sup>27</sup> On retrouve l'écho de l'argumentation de Porphyre chez Eusèbe (dans *Praep. Ev.* I, 1, 11; 2, 4 et *Dem. Ev.* I, 1, 11) comme Wilamowitz l'a démontré dans *Z.N.T.W.* 1 (1900).

<sup>28</sup> *C.C.*, I 14 et 16.

<sup>29</sup> *C.C.*, I 15.

anciens et sages, à la doctrine desquels il faudrait »retourner«). Et pourquoi—continue Origène—Celse met-il bien Linos, Musée, Orphée, Phérécyde, le Perse [211] Zoroastre et Pythagore parmi ceux qui ont connu l'ancienne doctrine, donc la vérité, mais pas Moïse, alors que les écrits de Moïse ont montré la bonne voie à tant de gens et qu'aucun écrit de quelqu'un comme Linos nous est parvenu.<sup>30</sup>

Origène traite encore plus à fond les accusations contre Moïse et sa doctrine et la partialité qui s'en dégage. Nous n'avons pas besoin de nous y arrêter pour le moment. La structure de l'argumentation d'Origène est claire. Il n'y a aucune raison de considérer la doctrine juive comme une corruption de l'ancienne doctrine; au contraire, elle la renferme plutôt. Et quant au christianisme, ce n'est pas non plus un judaïsme corrompu. Les événements qui se sont produits en Jésus et dans sa communauté prouvent qu'on n'a pas à faire ici avec une corruption mais avec l'oeuvre de Dieu.

Il est intéressant de regarder un peu plus avant dans l'histoire de l'Apologétique et de voir comment Eusèbe développe cette théorie de l'»ancienne doctrine« au début du quatrième siècle. Il fait une distinction entre les Hébreux et les Juifs. Les Juifs sont ceux qui ont vécu sous la loi de Moïse. Les Hébreux sont les hommes pieux d'une ère antérieure et dont Moïse parle dans ses oeuvres. Chez eux le besoin d'une loi ne se fit pas sentir, puisqu'ils pratiquaient la vertu de leur nature. Or le christianisme continue cette ancienne manière de vivre des Hébreux. Ce n'est donc pas une nouvelle doctrine, mais une doctrine de haute antiquité.<sup>31</sup> Dans *Dem. Ev.* I 2, 1 nous lisons: »Nous avons dit déjà ci-dessus que le christianisme n'est pas une sorte d'hellénisme (Ἑλληνισμός τις) ni une sorte de judaïsme; il a une propre forme d'adoration de Dieu qui n'est ni nouvelle ni absurde, mais très ancienne et connue aussi aux bienaimés de Dieu avant Moïse.« (Chez Justin on trouve également ce rapport des Chrétiens avec les hommes pieux avant Moïse, mais pas encore sous cette forme développée).

Nous arrivons maintenant à la deuxième accusation de Celse, savoir que la foi d'un Chrétien ne serait pas justifié rationnelle-

<sup>30</sup> C.C., I 16b et 18.

<sup>31</sup> A ce propos il faut se rendre compte qu'on n'aime pas νεωτερίζειν à cette époque, comme H. Dörrie l'a démontré par rapport à Plotin et Porphyre; voir Die Schultradition im Mittelplatonismus und Porphyrios, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique*, Tome XII, Genève 1965, p. 23.

ment (ἄλογος). On peut résumer la réponse d'Origène en trois points. a) Il admet qu'il y a pas mal de Chrétiens qui croient sans fondement rationnel (ἁλόγως), mais b) cela ne veut pas dire que la foi n'est pas justifiable rationnellement et de plus c) les adversaires eux-mêmes font aussi ce qu'ils reprochent aux Chrétiens: ils croient.

*Ad a)* Origène commence par établir que, s'il était possible pour tout le monde en délaissant les affaires de la vie de se consacrer à la philosophie—ce qui signifie ici, évidemment, l'examen des fondements de la foi—chacun devrait s'engager sur cette voie. Il sera possible de donner du christianisme une justification non moindre que de la philosophie grecque.<sup>32</sup> (Origène se sert ici du terme ἐξέτασις, qui nous rappelle l'ἀνεξέταστος de Porphyre). Mais si ce n'est pas possible, en partie à cause des exigences de la vie, en partie à cause de la paresse humaine, puisqu'il n'y a que très peu qui veulent s'imposer cet effort de la pensée, comment trouver alors une méthode plus efficace pour aider la foule que celle enseignée par Jésus? Origène appelle alors l'attention à l'amélioration de la vie, opérée par la simple foi (ψιλή πίστις) dans des foules innombrables. Qu'est-ce qui vaut mieux, demande-t-il, que ces gens croyant sans justification rationnelle réforment leurs moeurs ou qu'on diffère leur conversion fondée sur une simple foi tout en exigeant d'avord une justification rationnelle (ἐξέτασις λόγων)? Dans ce dernier [212] cas la plupart n'arriveront jamais à une amélioration de la vie. De plus cette amélioration elle-même est une preuve qu'il s'agit d'une action de Dieu; car on n'admettra pas non plus qu'un médecin qui réussit à guérir nombre de malades, y soit parvenu sans l'action de Dieu (ἀθέει), dit Origène.<sup>33</sup>

*Ad b)* Il résulte de ce que nous avons vu ci-dessus qu'Origène est d'avis qu'une justification rationnelle est possible. Il ne voit donc pas une contradiction absolue entre πίστις et ἀπόδειξις. A ce sujet nous serons encore mieux renseignés en consultant sa réponse à l'affirmation de Celse que les Grecs étaient très forts en justification et en mise en pratique de la vérité. On se rappelle que Celse se sert des termes κρῖναι, βεβαιώσασθαι en ἀσκήσαι πρὸς ἀρετήν. A quoi Origène répond: »Or voici ce que je peux dire, partant de son observation pour défendre la vérité des thèses du christianisme: quiconque vient des dogmes et des disciplines grecs à l'Evangile

<sup>32</sup> C.C., I 9, 13 ss.

<sup>33</sup> C.C., I 9, 21 ss.

peut non seulement juger (κρίναι ἄν) qu'elles sont vraies, mais encore prouver (κατασκευάσαι ἄν cf. βεβαιώσασθαι), en les mettant en pratique (ἀσκήσας), qu'elles remplissent la condition qui semblait faire défaut par rapport à une démonstration grecque prouvant ainsi la vérité du christianisme.<sup>34</sup> Origène profite donc de ces trois notions qui expriment chez Celse la puissance de la pensée grecque et dit: quand les Grecs se servent de ces talents, ils découvriront que le christianisme renferme la vérité. Origène ajoute encore: »Mais il faut encore ajouter: la parole<sup>35</sup> (divine) a sa démonstration propre, plus divine que celle des Grecs par la dialectique (θειοτέρα παρὰ τὴν ἀπὸ διαλεκτικῆς ἐλληνικῆν). Et cette démonstration divine, l'Apôtre la nomme »démonstration de l'Esprit et de la puissance«.<sup>36</sup> »Esprit« veut dire ici les prophéties comme argument de la foi en Christ; »puissance« venir dire les miracles. La prophétie et les miracles occupent une grande place dans l'Apologétique au début. Dodds a écrit à ce sujet des choses fort intéressantes dans son livre *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*.<sup>37</sup> Les prophéties (oracles) et les miracles étaient à cette époque à peu près généralement pris comme une réalité et par les Chrétiens et par les païens. A quels miracles et à quelles prophéties attacher la valeur? Voilà ce qui était d'importance.

Telles était la réponse d'Origène aux reproches de Celse que la foi soit ἄλογος. Il distingue d'un côté une simple foi (ψιλὴ πίστις), utile, profitable et qui par conséquent est bonne, et de l'autre côté la possibilité d'une adhésion bien fondée sur le raisonnement (μετὰ λόγου καὶ σοφίας, comme il dit dans *Contre Celse I* 13). Cette dernière possibilité est pour lui évidemment idéale. C'est la γνῶσις.

Ad c) Origène cependant ne s'en tient pas là. Il ne repousse pas seulement l'attaque de ses adversaires, mais procède lui-même à une contre-attaque. Il dit<sup>38</sup>: nos adversaires ne font que parler de notre foi comme d'un penchant parfaitement irraisonné, mais en

<sup>34</sup> Voir pour l'interprétation de ce texte et des textes suivants mon article »Notes on Origen, *Contra Celsum*« dans *Vigiliae Christianae* 20 (1966), p. 201–213, (printed on p. 161–73 in this volume) dont les résultats ont été recueillis dans les *Sources Chrétiennes* édition de ce texte soignée par le R.P. Marcel Borret, s.j. dont nous suivons ici la traduction.

<sup>35</sup> On pourrait traduire aussi λόγος par »la doctrine chrétienne«.

<sup>36</sup> Trad. du Père Borret.

<sup>37</sup> P. 124 ss.

<sup>38</sup> Voir *C.C.*, I 10–11.

fait ils croient eux-mêmes aussi. Car comment se fait-il que quelqu'un donne son adhésion à une certaine école de philosophie? N'en est-il pas ainsi en général qu'il y a un penchant pour cette école ou parce qu'on vient à rencontrer quelque adepte de cette école? Car ce n'est point après avoir étudié au préalable toutes les écoles de philosophie [213] qu'il fait son choix. Eh bien, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire sinon donner sa confiance, sa foi!

Il en est ainsi dans le monde de la pensée et dans l'action, donc dans la vie pratique. Ici encore on se laisse mener finalement par la confiance et l'espérance (πίστις et ἐλπίς). Quelqu'un qui va naviguer, qui va cultiver la terre, qui va se marier, ne se laisse-t-il pas mener finalement par la foi en la mer, foi en la terre, foi en l'épouse?

Ainsi toute la vie humaine est soutenue par la confiance, par la foi. Et, continue Origène, c'est là une confiance en les affaires humaines. N'est-il pas plus raisonnable alors de mettre sa confiance en Dieu et en Celui qui nous a enseigné d'adorer Dieu seulement, le Christ.

Ce qui est intéressant dans cette argumentation d'Origène est qu'il y avance quelque chose dont on avait à peine conscience dans la pensée philosophique de l'époque, l'élément de foi dans toute connaissance humaine. On ne pourra pas nier qu'en ceci Origène a donné une réponse nette aux objections formelles faites contre la foi des Chrétiens, entre autres par Celse. On peut considérer cette réponse comme la fin de la première phase du dialogue entre le christianisme et la philosophie grecque.

Pour finir il y a à remarquer qu'on voit s'accroître nettement dans la philosophie païenne la fonction de la πίστις après Origène. Porphyre—qui comme nous l'avons vu reprochait aux Chrétiens leur ἄλογος πίστις, reproche qu'on ne pouvait certainement pas appliquer à Origène—déclare à la fin de sa vie que πίστις est la première condition de l'âme pour s'avancer vers Dieu,<sup>39</sup> car, dit-il dans *Ad Marc* 24 »il nous faut croire (πιστεῦσαι) que notre salut tient uniquement à ce que nous nous tournons vers Dieu«. Et c'est ce qui est la fin suprême de la philosophie: se tourner vers Dieu. On pourrait dire, que dans le christianisme et dans le paganisme de cette époque il y a deux courants qui s'entre-croisent pour ainsi dire; dans la pensée chrétienne le courant de πίστις vers ἀπόδειξις, dans

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<sup>39</sup> Voir Dodds, *o.c.*, p. 122.

la pensée païenne, notamment dans celle du Néoplatonisme d'après Plotin, celui d'ἀπόδειξις vers πίστις. Et il y a lieu d'affirmer avec Daniélou<sup>40</sup> que dans cette époque ultérieure c'est plutôt le christianisme que le paganisme qui a pris la défense des droits du logos.

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<sup>40</sup> Dans son compte-rendu du livre précité de Dodds, dans *Recherches de science religieuse* 54 (1966), p. 305.

## TWO KINDS OF LOGOS

### Origen against Celsus\*

The middle of the second century A.D. sees the start of a process which was to prove of enormous significance to our Western world: the encounter between what for brevity's sake I will call 'the Greek world' and Christianity. The present paper will focus on this encounter, and in particular on the literature which reflects this encounter.

The literary sources provide us with most of our information about this event. I just mentioned the encounter between 'the Greek world' and Christianity. But the first term needs to be formulated more precisely: the Greek world is the mental world of the Greeks, Greek thinking, Greek philosophy as it had developed since the sixth century B.C. and had culminated in the figures of Plato and Aristotle, while the Hellenistic era also saw the rise of the Stoa—often called 'the philosophy of Hellenism'. This means that philosophical literature is the primary source for this encounter.

Christianity not only sets itself against this philosophy, it presents itself as a philosophy, or rather as the philosophy *par excellence*, as the one true philosophy. This may seem strange to us, people of the twentieth century. But we should consider that philosophy in those days was literally *philosophia*, love of wisdom. Philosophy claimed to show man the way to *eudaimonia*, well-being in the fullest sense. It was to teach him virtue, so that he could achieve this well-being. As Armstrong puts it in his introduction to the most extensive and thorough handbook that has been written about this period in Western thought, there was in those days a close relationship between philosophy and religion.<sup>1</sup> And Daniélou, one of the most authoritative scholars in the field of early Christian thought, says in his work on Origen that (Middle) Platonism, the great philosophical movement of the time we are talking about, was 'une philosophie religieuse'.<sup>2</sup> If this is taken into

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\* Presented as opening lecture for the academic year 1976–77 to the Department of Classics in Leiden on September 20th 1976.

<sup>1</sup> *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A.H. Armstrong, Cambridge 1967, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> J. Daniélou, *Origène*, Paris 1948, p. 98.

account, it is much easier to understand how Christianity could enter the flow of philosophical thinking in this period.

This entrance made a major impact, as is evidenced in various works of early Christian literature. I shall choose one in which it is possibly most discernible, because it not only voices the view of the Christian party but also that of Greek philosophy. It is Origen's work *Against Celsus*.

I start by introducing the *dramatis personae*. The author is Origen, the first great systematic thinker in Christianity. He was born circa 185, in Egypt, perhaps in Alexandria, one of the great cultural centres of the Hellenistic world, the city in which less than two centuries before—in Jesus' time—the Jewish thinker Philo had been active. Philo was a philosopher who had tried to connect his Jewish faith with Greek philosophical thinking. He had in particular attempted to explain the holy books, and above all the first book, the book of creation (Genesis), with the help of Greek philosophy. Origen's aim was similar. He wanted to explain *his* faith, i.e. the Christian faith, with the help offered by the instruments of Greek philosophy.

Origen was a Christian by birth. At a young age (about 18) he became the head of a catechetical school, which proves that his special gifts received early recognition. Later he founded a different kind of school, a sort of philosophical college. If we interpret the sources rightly, his philosophical schooling took place at the hands of someone greatly renowned in those days. Ammonius Saccas was a man who, like Socrates, wrote nothing himself. But it is apparent that he possessed great powers of stimulation, for he also taught Plotinus, who, after much searching and disappointment, eventually found what he wanted in Ammonius. Thus Ammonius was the teacher of the two great geniuses of the third century, as Plotinus and Origen may rightly be called.

The place occupied by Origen in the Greek Christian world can be compared with that of Augustine in the Latin Christian world. Like his predecessor Philo, Origen took up the task of expounding scripture, which he did in the form of sermons, commentaries, and notes on certain passages. Naturally he studied both the Old and the New Testament. He moreover wrote a systematic work, which he gave the typically philosophical title *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*. In this work he undertook to describe the 'principles' of Christianity by showing the lines along which Christian thinking proceeds.

Origen's writings are very extensive. This is partly due to his wealthy friend Ambrose, who at his prompting left the Gnostic sect of Valentinianism to embrace orthodoxy. Ambrose supported Origen in many different ways. In the sixth book of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (around 325), which is almost completely devoted to Origen, we read the following: While he was dictating, more than seven stenographers (ταχυγράφοι) were at this disposal, who relieved each other at regular intervals. Equally numerous were the copyists (βιβλιογράφοι, literally book-writers, i.e. the scribes who made the neat copies of the text), to whom were added girls who were practised in the art of calligraphy (καλλιγράφειν) (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.23). I imagine Origen pacing up and down his study and, with the utmost concentration, uttering his lapidary periods for the stenographers to take down. These worked short shifts, because Origen's style of speech was so fatiguing. The text then went to the 'book writers', who were helped by the calligraphers to embellish the text. Ambrose bore the cost of this entire enterprise and thus provided the material conditions for a voluminous oeuvre.

Ambrose stimulated Origen in other ways as well. Around the year 250, when Origen was about 65 years old, he asked Origen to write an answer to, or rather refutation of, a work that had been written against the Christians some seventy years earlier by a certain Celsus (Kelsos). The work was entitled Ἀληθὴς λόγος. Our only information about Celsus is what can be inferred from Origen's work. Because of Origen's method of working—on which more later—a large part of Celsus' text has survived. It shows that he was a Platonic philosopher with the characteristic traits of the Platonism of his time, usually called Middle Platonism. The texts do not offer any biographical information.

There are two striking facts here. First, the fact that as early as 180 a Greek philosopher thought it worthwhile to write a treatise against the Christians. This can be seen as an implicit recognition that Christianity is accepted as a discussion partner, in other words, that Christianity is accepted as a philosophy. Celsus' disdainful treatment of his opponents as stupid and outrageously pretentious does not detract from this. One can hardly expect otherwise in a period which assigned a predominant role to the traditional element in philosophy. I will comment on this further on. The second remarkable fact is that Origen thought it worthwhile to refute this work of Celsus 70 years after its publication. He obviously

believed that it could make an impression on the people of his own time.

Here we need to ask: what people? In other words, for whom did Origen write this work? What kind of readership did he have in mind when writing it? It is clear *against* whom he wrote it. That was, of course, Celsus. But whom did he write it *for*? In his introduction Origen says the following: it should not really be necessary to refute Celsus' work. His attacks should not affect any believer. For those who truly believe, the facts speak so clearly that they cannot be shaken by Celsus' words. However, says Origen, the faith of some people is weak. It is for them, and for those who are unfamiliar with Celsus, that he writes this work (*Against Celsus*, Pref. 6).

But the question remains: whom is he really addressing? Believers or unbelievers? After all, it is impossible to address these two groups at the same time. In my view, Origen is actually writing for believers. These may be weak in their faith, but they are people who accept the authority of the word of the holy books. I think that this is an important point and Origen is liable to be misunderstood and misjudged if we fail to see it.

Such a misjudgement is found in an otherwise brilliant paper by Heinrich Dörrie on Celsus' Platonic theology.<sup>3</sup> After analyzing some of Celsus' texts cited by Origen, Dörrie concludes that Celsus gave considerable impetus to the Platonic philosophy of his day. Particularly in his discussion of the highest being as the ground of all beings, he came close to Plotinus. In Dörrie's view, however, Origen hardly reacted to this, because he was not enough of a philosopher to do so. I would like to separate these two statements. It is true that 'Origen hardly reacted to Celsus' discussion'. But it is not true that 'he was not enough of a philosopher to do so'. The orientation of Origen's thought was different, because he was writing for believers. His framework of thought centres on the figure of Christ, the Logos. I cannot elaborate on this now, because it would involve a demonstration of how Origen's discussion evinces knowledge of these philosophical problems. The main point here is that it is vital for a reader to realize to whom a writer addresses his work.

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<sup>3</sup> H. Dörrie, 'Die platonische Theologie des Kelsos in ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit der christlichen Theologie auf Grund von Origenes c. Celsum 7,42 ff.', *Nachrichten der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen I Philologisch-Historische Klasse* Jrg. 1967, nr. 2, p. 21-55.

Before dealing with the substance of Origen's *Against Celsus*, I need to say something about its composition. The work consists of eight books, a division that goes back to Origen himself. In the edition of the *Sources Chrétiennes* it runs to a massive 700 pages. In size it can be compared with something like Herodotus' *History*. Its structure has a curious feature: Origen changes his plan while writing. He renders account of this in the preface, where he says: I initially planned (in a first chapter) to outline the main points of Celsus' arguments and to answer these briefly, after which I would σωματοποιῆναι τὸν λόγον—this can be rendered 'to flesh out his argument', i.e. to deal thoroughly with the various points. Later, however, after he had written this first chapter, i.e. sections I-XXVII of the first book, he decided to change tack. His motive was this: αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα, the subject matter itself, led me to consider that I could save time and confine myself to the answers given in the first chapter, and could go on in the rest of the work to follow the text as closely as possible and to refute the charges which Celsus lays against us (*Against Celsus*, Pref. 6). From that point on, his method is to quote a passage from Celsus' text and then respond to it. As a result, a large part of Celsus' work has been transmitted word for word. In this respect, to the best of my knowledge, it is a unique book.

What does Origen mean when he says that 'the subject matter itself' led him to such a change of course? I suspect that the answer is the following. When Origen had written the first chapter, he felt that the fundamental points in Celsus' argument had been briefly but also clearly indicated and answered, so much so that there was no point in formulating and refuting them in a broader argument. He therefore preferred to take the text as he found it and to dispute sentence after sentence, passage after passage. This would allow him to go into all the details as well. Moreover, such a text-by-text treatment could perhaps be dictated to his stenographers without much preparation, which was hardly possible in a large systematic discussion. This would account for the time-saving which he talks about. It is also clear that such a method of treatment could easily lead to a work of great length.

After these preliminary considerations let us turn to the work itself. The object of Origen's criticism is a book by Celsus entitled 'Ἀληθὴς λόγος, 'True Logos'. I will not yet translate the second word, because translating here is to a large extent interpreting. The

word 'Logos', of course, has many meanings. Or rather, the word 'Logos' can be applied to many facets of reality. Usually this is reality as the object of human thought, as capable of being 'grasped' by thought and rendered in speech. In Greek philosophy Logos is such an important word because a central tenet of Greek thinking holds that reality is ordered in a regular way, so that this reality can be grasped and expressed. The title 'Ἀληθὴς λόγος' has been translated in many different ways because of this broad scope of the word Logos. In my view, Wifstrand<sup>4</sup> is right when he says that it should be translated 'The true doctrine'. The reason for this will become apparent further on. However, it is important to realize that other meanings may be denoted in such a title. This is certainly the case here. Celsus' target is Christianity, and in Christian thinking the word 'Logos' also plays a vital part. (One could say that this word forms the link between Christianity and Greek philosophy.) I need only refer to the beginning of the Gospel of John: 'Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. 'In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God (1:1).' And 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (1:14)'. This text played a pivotal role in early Christian thinking. Midway through the second century, so just before the time of Celsus, there was a Christian convert from Greek philosophy, Justin, who developed a Logos philosophy which can be summed up as follows: God created the world through his Word, his Logos; God's word came to the chosen people of the Jews through the prophets. But the Logos was not entirely denied to the heathens: the Logos sowed seeds of truth among them too. Justin talks about the *Logos spermatikos*, the germinating Logos.<sup>5</sup> But the Word of God spoke most clearly in the prophets. They received the one true philosophy from God. These prophets, however, referred to the full revelation of God's Word in Christ. He is Himself the Logos.

Celsus was acquainted with these Christian Logos ideas. In *Against Celsus* III 13 Origen mentions a text by Celsus in which he reproaches the Christians for calling the Son of God αὐτολόγος, the Logos itself, the Logos in person. So when Celsus gave his work the

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<sup>4</sup> A. Wifstrand, 'Die wahre Lehre des Kelsos', *Bulletin de la société royale des lettres de Lund* 1941-42, 391ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the important article by J.H. Waszink, 'Bemerkungen zur Justins Lehre vom Logos Spermatikos', *Mullus. Festschrift Theodor Klauser*, (= Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergbd 1), Münster 1964, p. 385ff.

title 'The true Logos', he was reacting to this Christian doctrine. To Christians this title could sound like a direct attack on their faith.

But what was for Celsus the true Logos? One is inclined to think: the philosophy which he adhered to, and this is apparently the Platonic philosophy of his day, Middle Platonism. However, this cannot be the final answer for him, since it raises the question: where is the guarantee of truth? He could refer to Plato. (We must remember that philosophy was very traditional in his time. For example, Plotinus' sole aim was to represent Plato's deepest intentions.) But this still leaves the question: where is the guarantee of the truth of Plato's thinking? Celsus therefore goes further back in time. The 'true Logos' he talks about is the 'ancient Logos' (we will have to translate 'the ancient doctrine', if we are to be consistent with our choice for Wifstand's, 'true doctrine'), which is to be found among the ancient peoples and the ancient sages. In *Against Celsus* I 14 Origen cites a text by Celsus which reads as follows: "Ἐστὶν ἀρχαῖος ἄνωθεν λόγος, 'there is an ancient doctrine from primeval times (this is my understanding of ἄνωθεν) which engaged the minds of most ancient peoples and cities and also wise men.' As Origen says in the introduction to this text, Celsus apparently assumes that a large number of peoples are connected by the same Logos. This is a very interesting theory. It is reminiscent of the idea of a golden age in which, to quote Seneca (*Ep.* 90), the people were *recentes a diis*, i.e. their contact with the gods was still fresh. For Celsus these ancient nations had retained some of this original authenticity, some of the original revelation, one might perhaps say. In actual fact Celsus was strongly guided by Plato. In his view, however, Plato was firmly embedded in the tradition of the ancient doctrine. Celsus could base this on various places in Plato's work where he refers to the παλαιὸς λόγος or the παλαιοὶ λόγοι and to the story of Atlantis at the beginning of the *Timaeus*, where the Egyptians are presented as an ancient, wise people, compared with whom the Greeks are mere children.<sup>6</sup> (In some texts which talk about an ancient tradition Plato also uses the term ἀληθὴς λόγος. Scholars have therefore seen the title of Celsus'

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<sup>6</sup> An interesting text about this subject is Plato's *Philebus* 16c5–10 where he writes about 'the ancients who were taller than we are and who were closer to the gods', and who had received wisdom as a gift of the gods. See also *Timaeus* 40d7 ff.

work as a borrowing from Plato.<sup>7</sup>) In any case it is clear that this title indicates a very central theme in Celsus' thinking.

The origin of this 'ancient Logos' theory is to be sought in the Stoa. After its hey-day in the time of Plato and Aristotle, Greek philosophy began to decline and was in danger of being bogged down in the mire of scepticism. In the Stoa, however, thought was given a new impulse through contact with the wisdom of the ancient peoples, a contact established in the wake of Alexander's conquests. This wisdom, which formed a refreshing contrast with the purely Greek form of thinking, was seen by the Stoics as a manifestation of the Logos, which is the central principle of their philosophy.

It is clear that this theory gave a solid philosophical basis to everything that was 'ancient doctrine'. It meant an adherence to tradition which also extended to the sphere of action, to the sphere of the νόμος, i.e. the standards of behaviour in law and custom. It is in fact Celsus' main accusation that the Christians are at variance not only with the ἀρχαῖος λόγος but also with the κοινὸς νόμος (e.g. *Against Celsus* I 1).

Before looking at Origen's reply, I want to return briefly to Justin's doctrine. He appealed to an eternally existing Logos which spoke through the prophets. This, too, could be called an ἀρχαῖος λόγος. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin talks about philosophy as 'knowledge sent down to mankind by God'.<sup>8</sup> Of course, there is a radical difference in the substance of these Logoi, but there is a clear similarity in their point of departure. In both cases one finds a belief in an ancient Logos.

How, then, does Origen react? He has no objection to the idea of an 'ancient Logos'. But he does object when Celsus enumerates a long series of wise nations and excludes the Jewish people from them. Celsus, says Origen, regards the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Indians, the Persians, the Odryses, and the inhabitants of Samothrace and Eleusis as wise peoples, but he does not count the Jews among them (I 14). Origen makes the same comment in relation to the names of wise men listed by Celsus: these include Linus, Musaeus, Orpheus, Pherecydes, the Persian Zoroaster, and Pythagoras, but Moses is not mentioned. According to Origen,

<sup>7</sup> See Wifstrand 399-400.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J.C.M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher, Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho Chapters one to nine*, Leiden 1971.

Celsus is guilty of applying a double standard. He asks: why do you believe the books of other nations, whereas you regard the books of the Jews as unreliable? Why do you praise the wisdom of these men, although hardly any writings of them exist, but you ignore Moses, of whom so many works have been passed down, which have guided the lives of so many people (I 16)?

It is quite plain why Celsus makes this judgement. In his view, the Jews branch off from the Egyptians. They are thus not truly ancient. They were guilty of *στάσις*, rebellion, and so became unfaithful to the ancient *Nomos*. And Moses was not a real sage but owed the wisdom he possessed to the Egyptians. Thanks to this wisdom he was able to gain superhuman renown and mislead a group of simple people, farmers and shepherds. In doing so he used magical powers (*γοητεία*) which he possessed, which explains the stories of miraculous deeds that are told about him (I 21ff.).

To continue Celsus' argument: what Moses did to the Egyptians (he was guilty of *στάσις*, became unfaithful to the ancient *Nomos*, misled a group of simple people by using *γοητεία*), this is what Jesus did to the Jewish people. Like Moses, Jesus dwelt in Egypt, where he gained knowledge of special powers. On his return from Egypt he proclaimed himself Son of God by virtue of these powers (I 29). Christianity is the result of unfaithfulness to the ancient *Nomos* of Judaism, it is a *στάσις*. A group of simple people, fishermen, were misled by Jesus. His so-called miracles are the result of *γοητεία*, which led these simple people astray (*Against Celsus* I 26f.).

What does Origen have to say in reaction to this? First, he disputes Celsus' claim that the Jews branched off from the Egyptians and so are not ancient and do not possess true wisdom. He then contests Celsus' view of Moses' as an impostor. He was not a magician who deceived the Jewish people. His main argument is that Moses' doctrine of God and the moral improvement he wants to stimulate are appropriate to someone who is concerned with people's welfare and not to an impostor.

The same applies to the prophets. Or rather: to the other prophets, for Moses is the great prophet. The prophets form an essential link in Origen's argumentation. He says in *Against Celsus* I 49 that Celsus' 'deliberately passes over the main argument for Jesus' existence, namely that he was predicted by the prophets of the Jews, Moses and all those after him or even before Moses'. Elsewhere (III 4, 16-17) Origen talks about the *ἀληθὴς λόγος* of the

prophets, thus creating a clear counterpart to Celsus' ἀληθὴς λόγος. And with regard to Jesus, he challenges Celsus' accusations mainly by pointing out that Jesus' teachings are not those of a deceiver and that the behaviour of his followers requires a different explanation as well.

This brings us to an argument which appears repeatedly in Origen's dispute with Celsus, the argument of the good influence which the doctrine of the Logos has on the lives of the supporters of this doctrine. This argument returns in various forms. When Celsus develops a profound theory about the highest being and the way in which this being can be known (VII 42, 45), Origen says that he does not want to detract from what is sublimely expressed there. But he points out how these exalted ideas may go together with the worship of images, idolatry, the veneration of false gods (VII 44, 52). In this way Origen draws attention to what he believes to be 'illogical' in Celsus' doctrine, i.e. at odds with the Logos.

In his turn, Celsus also accuses the Christians of 'illogical' action. He raises two fundamental points. First, he blames the Christians for seeing the Logos of God in Christ. In his view, the Logos should be something pure, something holy. But what we actually see is a man whose life was marked by humiliation, who was led away in ignominy, and who died a cruel death. For Celsus this clashes with all the ideas about the Logos. Origen, of course, will argue from the prophets here.

Second, Celsus objects that Christianity accepts many people who do not make their choice on the basis of rational inquiry but by virtue of a simple and irrational faith: ἄλογος πίστις. He says that there are even Christians who want to exclude all philosophy and live by the slogans 'do not inquire but believe', 'faith will save you'. But, says Celsus, someone who adheres to this principle may fall victim to all kinds of evil persons who want to lead people astray.

Origen counters Celsus' objection of illogical action in *Against Celsus* I 9-11. He starts by admitting that people are received in the community of faith without being capable of giving a rational account. This is not ideal. If possible, everybody should φιλοσοφεῖν and in this way reason out their faith. After all, he says, the books of the prophets and the gospels offer an abundance of arguments. But this is beyond most people, either because they must work for a living or because they are weak. One is therefore left with the

choice of either demanding a rational account beforehand or accepting people with a simple faith. In practice the latter choice is made and this has greatly improved the lives of many. This improvement of life, says Origen, is in itself a proof of the doctrine's soundness.

But Origen goes further. Celsus and his supporters always accuse us of 'believing'. This suggests that they do not believe, that they are led only by proofs. But the reality is different. What usually happens when someone feels attracted to philosophy? He either tries his luck in some or other philosophical school or he finds one particular teacher, and does this not involve a trust, a *belief*, that this direction is the best? For usually people do not first listen to the arguments of all the philosophers and then make their choice. No, though they are loathe to admit it, people join a particular school on the basis of a non-rational impulse (ἀλόγῳ τινὶ ᾤοντι). This is the situation in theoretical matters. The same applies in the practical affairs of life. Someone who goes to sea, someone who marries, someone who begets a child, or someone who sows seed in the earth does so because he trusts (believes) that the outcome will be favourable, even though he knows the opposite may be true. In the same way, says Origen, all human life depends on faith and hope. He then goes on to draw this conclusion: if we must believe, should we not believe in the highest God and him who taught us to give praise to this God rather than in people? This conclusion clearly shows that Origen is addressing people who believe, as I suggested earlier.

It seems to me that Origen has touched on a very fundamental point here. He and Celsus are not opposed in such a way that one relies on Logos (in the sense of proof) and the other on πίστις, faith. Rather both are 'believers'. They both believe in an ancient Logos. But at that point their ideas diverge radically. For Celsus the Logos came to man in the primeval age and made its way through history. In this way it came to Plato, one of the people in whom it was present to a remarkable degree. To gain wisdom oneself, one must look back to these ancient sages.

Origen sees it differently. The Logos of God was revealed in the prophets from the earliest days, but appeared itself in Jesus Christ. In him the Logos assumed a historical form, which means something new, a new event in time to which all things are directed. This is unacceptable in the eyes of those who support the ancient

Logos. It is νεωτερίζειν, innovation, something that is totally intolerable. And thus, after all that was said before, we have come to the heart of this spiritual conflict: the clash between the two kinds of Logos is a clash between the old and the new.

## LE PORTRAIT DE LA PHILOSOPHIE GRECQUE DANS JUSTIN, *DIALOGUE* I 4-5

Le dialogue entre le chrétien Justin et le Juif Tryphon commence par une discussion sur la philosophie. Le Juif a surpris Justin en disant qu'il avait une haute estime de la philosophie—évidemment c'est la philosophie grecque qu'il a en vue. Justin demande à Tryphon, comment, en ayant comme maîtres Moïse et les prophètes, il peut s'attendre à tirer de la philosophie un profit comparable. Tryphon réagit: «Pourquoi pas? Les philosophes ne parlent-ils pas toujours de Dieu? Ne font-ils pas toujours des recherches sur sa monarchie et sa providence? N'est-ce pas là la tâche de la philosophie: enquêter sur le divin?» Tryphon veut dire: la philosophie et les livres de Moïse et des prophètes ont le même objet. Pourquoi donc ne pas étudier les philosophes?

Justin répond qu'il est de la même opinion en ce qui concerne la tâche de la philosophie. Mais, dit-il, la plupart des philosophes (grecs) ne s'acquittent pas de cette tâche. Justin fait suivre alors un portrait de la philosophie grecque, qui doit montrer la justesse de ce reproche.

Ce texte a été étudié par plusieurs auteurs. Les derniers dix ans ont vu paraître trois commentaires sur le prologue du dialogue, c'est-à-dire sur les chapitres 1-9. En 1966 M. Hyldahl publia son livre *Philosophie und Christentum: Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins*, Acta Theologica Danica 9, Kopenhagen. Ensuite l'auteur du présent article a essayé de donner une explication plus précise du même texte (*An Early Christian Philosopher. Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, chapters one to nine*. Philosophia Patrum 1, Leiden 1971). Puis R. Joly traita du même texte dans son livre *Christianisme et Philosophie. Etudes sur Justin et les Apologues grecs du deuxième siècle*, Bruxelles 1973. Enfin J. Pépin a écrit un article dans les *Studia Gerardo Verbeke dicata (Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, Leuven 1976), consacré à la première partie de ce portrait, c'est-à-dire au *Dial.* 1,4, sous le titre «Prière et providence au 2<sup>e</sup> siècle» (p. 111-125). [182]

Comme en témoignent les études mentionnées, ce passage pose un grand nombre de questions. On peut les réduire, je pense, à trois questions principales:

- 1) Quel est le sens du texte?
- 2) Qui sont les philosophes ou les courants philosophiques envisagés par Justin dans ce passage?
- 3) Justin est-il honnête en traçant un tel portrait de la philosophie grecque?

A la troisième question M. Joly a donné une réponse prononcée. Selon lui «l'outrance, l'injustice polémique de Justin n'est guère douteuse» (p. 18). L'exposé que donne M. Joly de ce passage à l'air d'une accusation. On doit en examiner la justesse. La deuxième question se pose spécialement sur le paragraphe 4. M. Pépin s'est concentré sur ce paragraphe et sa contribution signifie un progrès décisif vers la solution des problèmes autour de ce passage. Mais parce qu'il n'étudie que le paragraphe 4, l'interprétation du texte dans sa totalité reste encore à faire. Voilà la fin principale de cette contribution. Mais avant d'entreprendre une telle interprétation, j'avoue volontiers que l'article de M. Pépin m'a indiqué la route.

Commençons par donner le texte grec et une traduction du passage. Celle du paragraphe 4 est de M. Pépin:

(4) Ναί, ἔφην, οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς δεδοξάκαμεν. ἀλλ' οἱ πλείστοι οὐδὲ τούτου πεφροντίκασιν, εἴτε εἷς εἴτε καὶ πλείους εἰσὶ θεοί, καὶ εἴτε προνοοῦσιν ἡμῶν ἐκάστου εἴτε καὶ οὐ, ὥς μηδὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν τῆς γνώσεως ταύτης συντελούσης· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐπιχειροῦσι πείθειν ὡς τοῦ μὲν σύμπαντος καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γενῶν καὶ εἰδῶν ἐπιμελεῖται θεός, ἐμοῦ δὲ καὶ σοῦ οὐκ ἔτι καὶ τοῦ καθ' ἕκαστα, ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἂν ηὔχόμεθα αὐτῷ δι' ὅλης νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας. (5) τοῦτο δὲ ὅπη αὐτοῖς τελευτᾷ, οὐ χαλεπὸν συννοῆσαι· ἄδεια γὰρ καὶ ἐλευθερία λέγειν ἔπεται τοῖς δοξάζουσι ταῦτα, ποιεῖν τε ὅ τι βούλονται καὶ λέγειν, μήτε κόλασιν φοβουμένοις μήτε ἀγαθὸν ἐλπίζουσί τι ἐκ θεοῦ. πῶς γάρ; οἷ γε αἰεὶ ταῦτ' ἔσσεσθαι λέγουσι, καὶ ἔτι ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ ἔμπαλιν βιώσεσθαι ὁμοίως, μήτε κρείσσονας μήτε χείρους γεγονότας. ἄλλοι δὲ τινες, ὑποστησάμενοι ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀσώματον τὴν ψυχὴν, οὔτε κακόν τι δράσαντες ἡγοῦνται δώσειν δίκην (ἀπαθὲς γὰρ τὸ ἀσώματον), οὔτε, ἀθανάτου αὐτῆς ὑπαρχούσης, δέονται τι τοῦ θεοῦ ἔτι.

(5) ἔπειτα scripsi secutus Hyldahl: λέγειν καὶ ἔπεσθαι AG (cf. *An Early Christian Philosopher*, 40–41). [183]

(4) «Certainement, dis-je, —nous aussi sommes de cet avis. Mais la plupart ne se soucient même pas de savoir s'il y a un seul ou plusieurs dieux, s'ils exercent leur providence sur chacun de nous ou non, dans la pensée que cette connaissance ne contribue en rien au bonheur; davantage (ἀλλὰ καὶ), ils essaient de nous convaincre

que Dieu a soin de l'univers et des genres et espèces, mais non plus de moi et de toi ni d'aucun être en particulier, sans quoi nous ne le prions pas à longueur de nuit et de jour. (5) Il n'est pas difficile à comprendre où cette théorie les fait aboutir. Ceux qui professent ces opinions n'auront aucune crainte, ils se sentiront tout à fait libres, ils feront et diront ce qu'ils veulent, puisqu'ils ne craignent aucun châtement de Dieu et n'en espèrent aucun bien. Car quel espoir ou quelle crainte auraient-ils? Ils prétendent que les mêmes choses se passeront toujours et que moi et toi revivrons à nouveau d'une même façon, devenus ni meilleurs ni pires. D'autres, se fondant sur le principe que l'âme est immortelle et incorporelle, pensent qu'ils ne seront pas punis de leurs mauvaises actions, puisque l'incorporel ne peut souffrir, et, l'âme étant immortelle, ils n'ont besoin d'aucun don de Dieu.»

### I. *Le sens du texte*

Que dit Justin exactement? La difficulté se manifeste quand on se pose la question: jusqu'à quel point «la plupart» sont-ils le sujet de ce passage? En d'autres termes: qui sont le sujet de ἐπιχειροῦσι? qui sont indiqués par αὐτοῖς, par οἱ γέ? Et les ἄλλοι δέ τινες à qui s'opposent-ils?

Quand on se tient au texte des manuscrits, on ne peut guère avoir de doute à l'égard du verbe ἐπιχειροῦσι. Mais parce que la théorie mentionnée dans cette phrase semble être incompatible avec celle de la phrase précédente, Hyldahl et Joly ont proposé de lire ἄλλοι καὶ au lieu de ἀλλὰ καὶ. Pépin est d'accord avec moi qu'une telle correction, d'ailleurs peu satisfaisante pour le style et même pour le sens ne semble être nécessaire (p. 112). Le point de vue de Justin, dit-il, «est principalement celui du moraliste; or les deux attitudes coïncident par leurs conséquences pratiques puisque, selon sa propre description, la première retire au problème de Dieu toute incidence sur le bonheur humain, et que la seconde exclut de la vie morale la prise en considération de la récompense ou du châtement vanant de Dieu» (p. 112-113).

Si la plupart sont le sujet de ἐπιχειροῦσι, les deux pronoms αὐτοῖς et οἱ γέ, doivent porter sur le même sujet. Pépin dit: «à suivre le texte des manuscrits il conserve la même cible jusqu'à la fin du par. 5, au moment où ἄλλοι δέ τινες indique qu'il en vient à d'autres adversaires» (p. 112). [184]

Mais la restriction faite dans cette phrase est-elle nécessaire? A

qui s'opposent les ἄλλοι δέ τινες? La réponse à la deuxième question donnera la solution aussi à la première.

Etudions de plus près le paragraphe 5. M. Pépin le résume de la façon suivante: «Justin montre les conséquences morales fâcheuses de l'attitude qu'il vient de décrire (en par. 4) et il évoque enfin d'autres philosophes ("Ἄλλοι δέ τινες) qui, partant de présupposés différents, aboutissent aux mêmes erreurs pratiques» (p. 111-112). Ce résumé montre que l'auteur ne s'intéresse guère à la phrase qui précède la dernière et qui commence par οἷ γε. Cela se manifeste de nouveau dans une autre remarque à la même page: «les doctrines décrites au par. 4 (et même dans la majeure partie du par. 5) sont homogènes, en ce qu'elles peuvent toutes être attribuées à 'la plupart' des philosophes» (p. 112). Evidemment les mots entre parenthèses portent sur la phrase qui commence par οἷ γε.

A mon avis, M. Pépin a négligé cette phrase dans la discussion rapide du par. 5, qui n'était pas l'objet direct de son article. (Autrement il n'aurait pas dit que la théorie dans cette phrase est homogène avec celles du par. 4. Car il sait fort bien que la théorie décrite dans cette phrase est d'origine stoïcienne et, comme telle, n'a pas beaucoup à faire avec celles du par. 4). Et c'est par cette négligence qu'il en est venu à son analyse, qui fait une césure dans ce passage antiphilosophique avant ἄλλοι δέ τινες.

A mon avis, il y a deux arguments qui s'opposent à cette analyse. Premièrement, si on accepte que, dans les phrases précédentes, Justin attribue *diverses* théories à «la plupart» des philosophes, et qu'on interprète «la plupart» comme l'équivalent des «philosophes *en général*» (cf. Pépin, p. 113), on ne peut guère entendre que Justin vienne à attribuer une théorie à «d'autres». Deuxièmement—et cet argument est plus grave—, s'il y a une césure dans ce passage, elle ne se trouve pas avant Ἄλλοι δέ τινες, mais avant οἷ γε. Cela résulte d'une analyse du passage dans sa totalité, qui va suivre maintenant. Il me semble, en effet, qu'on n'a pas suffisamment étudié ce qu'on pourrait appeler «le sens global» du texte. Pour découvrir ce sens, il faut suivre exactement le raisonnement de Justin.

Justin commence par constater que «la plupart» des philosophes ne s'intéressent pas au problème de Dieu. Puis il dit qu'ils veulent nous faire croire que la providence de Dieu ne s'étend pas jusqu'aux individus. Ce n'est plus le problème de Dieu tout court qui est le centre de l'intérêt maintenant, mais le problème de la relation entre Dieu et l'homme. La cause de ce changement d'intérêt

apparaît dans la phrase suivante. C'est [185] le point de vue de Justin, le point de vue du moraliste. Evidemment il veut attirer l'attention du lecteur sur les conséquences morales des théories de «la plupart» des philosophes. Et les conséquences morales sont les mêmes dans les deux cas. Les conséquences morales sont pour Justin l'argument décisif pour rejeter les théories philosophiques, pour rejeter la philosophie en général.

Dans mon commentaire (p. 34), j'ai fait remarquer qu'à ce point l'argumentation de Justin a atteint sa fin logique. Mais Justin poursuit son raisonnement en ajoutant deux théories qui, comme telles, n'ont rien à faire avec le problème de Dieu et donc ne montrent pas que les philosophes ne s'intéressent pas à ce problème. Il les ajoute parce qu'elles ont les mêmes conséquences morales. La première enseigne un déterminisme total et enlève donc le libre arbitre; la deuxième dit que l'âme est impassible et sans aucun besoin. Dans les deux cas l'homme n'aura, en théorie, ni crainte, ni espoir.

On voit la structure de l'argumentation: Justin mentionne d'abord deux théories diverses, l'une concernant le problème de Dieu, l'autre concernant sa providence, il attire l'attention sur les conséquences fâcheuses pour la vie morale, puis sur deux théories, qui portent sur un autre terrain, mais qui ont les mêmes conséquences fâcheuses. Cette analyse montre qu'il y a dans ce passage une césure claire avant πὼς γάρ; Ce que Justin ajoute après cette césure résulte du point de vue de l'auteur mais ne concerne pas directement le problème de Dieu. Donc les deux théories du par. 5 vont ensemble et les ἄλλοι δέ τινες s'opposent aux οἷ γε. On pourrait remplacer οἷ γε par ὧν γε ἄλλοι μὲν; les ἄλλοι δέ τινες s'opposeraient alors à ces ἄλλοι μὲν, et ὧν porterait sur οἱ πλείστοι. Cela nous amène à la conclusion que «la plupart» sont le sujet du passage jusqu'à la fin du par. 5, inclus les ἄλλοι τινές.

Pour caractériser ce *passage total*, je voudrais faire usage de la formule heureuse de M. Pépin: Justin a confectionné «un portrait composite des philosophes en général, en rassemblant des traits de provenances diverses» (p. 113). Cette diversité se montre à la fois dans le par. 4, où l'on trouve deux théories différentes concernant le problème de Dieu, et dans le par. 5, qui contient deux théories différentes, l'une concernant l'ordre du monde, l'autre concernant la nature de l'âme. Mais ces quatre théories ont leur unité dans les conséquences morales.[186]

## II. *Qui sont les philosophes envisagés par Justin?*

Quant aux deux théories du par. 5 la provenance n'est pas douteuse. On reconnaît aisément d'abord la thèse stoïcienne qui dit que le cours des choses dans ce monde s'écoule selon des cycles identiques. Dans la deuxième thèse, on reconnaît la théorie platonicienne concernant l'âme humaine. Sur la justesse des conséquences tirées par Justin, voyez la troisième partie de cet article.

Mais les deux théories du par. 4, d'où proviennent-elles? Dans mon commentaire, je me suis référé à des tendances particulières dans le Platonisme, le Stoïcisme et l'Aristotélisme, qui pourraient expliquer cette partie du portrait donné par Justin de la philosophie grecque. M. Joly a critiqué ces efforts en attirant l'attention sur des textes qui montrent des opinions opposées. M. Pépin a creusé plus profondément dans le matériel philosophique. Partant de l'articulation des notions de providence et de prière, comme elle se manifeste dans ce passage de Justin, il en vient à la conclusion qu'on a affaire ici à une composante cyrénaïque dans la pensée grecque. Cela vaut de l'indifférence quant à la connaissance de Dieu aussi bien que du rejet d'une providence individuelle. Les concordances entre le texte de Justin et les textes cyrénaïques apportés par M. Pépin sont vraiment frappantes. Les adhérents de la première thèse chez Justin donnent comme motif de leur indifférence qu'une telle connaissance ne contribue en rien au bonheur (ὡς μηδὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν τῆς γνώσεως ταύτης συντελοῦσης). Les cyrénaïques congédient la physique (qui englobe aussi la théologie) et la logique ὡς μηδὲν πρὸς τὸ εὐδαιμόνως βιοῦν συνεργοῦντα (Pépin, p. 1225, n. 61 = Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. mathem.* 7,11 = fg. 147A Mannebach, p. 37. Dans la même note M. Pépin mentionne une observation de Thémistius disant que Socrate est à l'origine de cette opinion. Cf. mon commentaire, p. 35). Le motif attribué par Justin aux adversaires d'une providence individuelle est un *argumentum ad hominem*. Ils disent aux chrétiens: votre prière incessante montre qu'il n'y a pas de providence individuelle. Car s'il y avait une telle providence, elle rendrait toute prière superflue. Pépin a découvert aussi cette argumentation dans un contexte cyrénaïque.

Dans mon commentaire j'ai pris la providence «dans le sens de l'heimarméné» et conclu à une provenance stoïcienne. M. Pépin m'a convaincu qu'une telle démarche n'est pas nécessaire. Je renvoie le lecteur aux pages très instructives de son article (p. 119 ss).

M. Joly a essayé de donner une interprétation diverse de cet

argument. Il suggère que les philosophes tirent leur argument, non du fait de la prière, [187] mais de l'expérience de sa vanité. Comme l'a remarqué M. Pépin, rien dans ce texte ne favorise cette interprétation. Cet argument, qui est une invention de M. Joly, ne se trouve dans aucune polémique d'un philosophe païen avec les chrétiens. A mon avis, la raison en est claire. Car un tel argument est aisément convertible: les chrétiens pourraient dire que leur prière incessante montre qu'elle n'est pas vaine; autrement ils ne persisteraient pas à prier.

### III. *Justin est-il honnête?*

M. Joly accuse Justin d'outrance et d'injustice polémique à trois points dans ce passage. 1. «Il est fort excessif,» dit-il, «de prétendre, à son époque, que la plupart des philosophes n'ont cure ni de Dieu en tant qu'un ou multiple, ni de sa providence.» 2. «Au début du paragraphe 5, Justin insinue clairement l'immoralité des philosophes dont il est question.» 3. Justin fait tirer aux Platoniciens de leur théorie des conséquences morales qui leur sont très certainement étrangères (p. 17). Considérons de plus près ces trois reproches.

*Ad 1.* a) Le problème de Dieu en tant qu'un ou multiple. M. Joly rejette les rapprochements faits dans mon commentaire. On peut être d'accord avec lui qu'il s'agit «d'un courant bien vague en regard des problèmes précis que pose Justin» (p. 17). On pourrait en outre renvoyer le lecteur à un philosophe qui est à peu près contemporain de Justin et qui s'intéresse bien au problème de Dieu. Dans son *Contre Celse* Origène cite les mots suivants de son adversaire: «Il y a dans l'homme une part supérieure au terrestre, apparentée à Dieu; ceux en qui cet élément—c'est-à-dire l'âme—est en bon état, tendent de toutes leurs forces à ce qui lui est apparenté—c'est-à-dire à Dieu—, et ils brûlent du désir de toujours en entendre parler et de s'en ressouvenir» (*C. Cels.* 1,8). Et Justin lui-même dit un peu plus loin (*Dial.* 2,7) que la vision de Dieu était le but de la philosophie de Platon.

D'autre part on trouve dans la philosophie grecque l'attitude que M. Pépin a signalée. Quelle attitude l'emportait dans la philosophie actuelle de ces jours?

b) Quant au problème de la providence, je voudrais me borner aux observations suivantes de M. Pépin: «Joly est tout à fait fondé d'affirmer qu'aux premiers siècles de notre ère, la croyance à une

providence individuelle est partout répandue. Mais il faut ajouter que la thèse d'une providence limitée aux grands ensembles est à peine moins courante; davantage, ce sont souvent les mêmes écoles, et parfois les mêmes auteurs, [188] qui professent l'une et l'autre» (p. 117). Et à l'égard de la croyance à une providence individuelle il dit: «De ce que la croyance à une providence individuelle connaissait tant de vogue, il s'ensuit, bien évidemment, que les chrétiens n'en avaient pas l'exclusivité et que Justin, s'il le laisse entendre (ce qui n'est pas sûr), le fait tendancieusement. Deux observations doivent pourtant être consignées ici. D'une part, il subsiste des traces d'attaques païennes contre la prétention des chrétiens à concilier providence universelle et providence individuelle; c'est la preuve que la croyance à celle-ci pouvait, dans certains cas, figurer dans leur 'image de marque'. D'autre part, il arrivait aux chrétiens de faire expressément de cette croyance un article de leur foi. Replacée dans ce double contexte, l'idée de revendiquer la providence individuelle pour une propriété chrétienne paraîtrait moins extravagante; rien ne prouve d'ailleurs que Justin ait eu dans le par. 4 une telle intention.»

On constate une grande différence d'approche entre M. Pépin et M. Joly. Le premier est un commentateur beaucoup plus bienveillant de Justin que l'autre.

*Ad 2.* Pour souligner la partialité de Justin M. Joly aurait pu renvoyer le lecteur à un texte de Celse, où celui-ci dit des chrétiens: «Ils ont au moins cette opinion droite que ceux qui ont mené une vie vertueuse seront heureux, mais que les gens injustes seront toujours accablés de maux éternels. C'est une doctrine que ni eux ni personne d'autre ne doivent jamais abandonner» (*Contre Celse* 8,49 tr. Borret).

D'autre part, on ne peut nier que la foi en des récompenses ou des châtements dans l'autre monde joue un rôle énorme dans le christianisme. Qu'on lise, par exemple, le *Contre Celse*, où Origène répond à l'accusation de Celse, que la plupart des croyants ne peuvent donner raison de leur foi: «lequel était préférable pour eux? D'avoir, dans une foi non réfléchie, un peu réformé leurs mœurs et trouvé secours dans la croyance aux châtements des fautes et aux récompenses des bonnes œuvres, ou bien différer leur conversion ...» (*C. Cels.* 1,9). Quel rôle jouait cette croyance aux récompenses ou châtements dans l'autre monde chez les adhérents des philosophes grecs? On se demande si l'idée de revendiquer aussi cette con-

viction pour une propriété chrétienne ne paraîtrait pas moins extravagante, comme M. Pépin le soupçonne à l'égard de la providence individuelle.

Le texte censuré par M. Joly montre une opinion très négative quant à l'influence de la philosophie sur la vie morale. Il ne faut pas y lire une attaque personnelle contre les philosophes eux-mêmes.[189]

*Ad 3.* On constate que Justin s'est occupé sérieusement de la question de savoir si l'âme humaine était non-engendrée et immortelle. En *Dial.* 5 il dit que seul Dieu est non-engendré et incorruptible. Il argumente ainsi: une pluralité d'êtres non-engendrés et immortels est impossible, parce que l'être non-engendré est semblable, égal et identique au non-engendré. Si l'on disait que l'âme est non-engendrée et immortelle, il s'ensuivrait que l'âme est identique à Dieu.—Deux siècles plus tard on trouve la même objection contre la thèse que l'âme est noétique et immortelle, qui est devenue alors une thèse chrétienne, dans le *De anima et resurrectione* de Grégoire de Nysse (PG 46,41B).

Je ne connais pas, il est vrai, de textes où des Platoniciens tirent de leur doctrine de l'âme les conséquences mentionnées par Justin. A-t-on affaire à une déduction de Justin lui-même? Ou connaissait-il des philosophes platoniciens qui montraient une mentalité de contentement et un sentiment d'impassibilité, comme on les trouve parfois chez le sage stoïcien?

En dehors de ces remarques sur les détails, je voudrais encore une fois attirer l'attention sur le passage dans sa totalité. Que veut Justin argumenter dans ce passage? On aimerait répondre: il veut montrer que la plupart des philosophes ne s'intéressent pas au problème de Dieu; c'est cela qu'il fait attendre au début du passage. Mais après la lecture du texte on se rend compte que l'auteur veut, en effet, montrer que la plupart des philosophes n'acceptent pas *un Dieu qui récompense le bien et punit le mal*. Voilà l'angle sous lequel il considère «le problème de Dieu». Partant de cette idée il a rassemblé quatre thèses qui s'opposent à une telle foi; c'est-à-dire deux thèses qui concernent directement le problème de Dieu, deux autres qui ont pour conséquence qu'on n'a ni crainte ni espoir pour la vie dans l'autre monde, et, en conséquence, ni crainte ni espoir envers *un Dieu qui récompense et punit*. Il trouve ces théories dans les environs cyrénaïques, dans le Stoïcisme, dans le Platonisme. Est-il étonnant qu'il parle de «la plupart» des philosophes?

Les observations précédentes contribuent, à mon avis, à faire paraître au moins compréhensible le portrait que Justin peint de la philosophie grecque. Quand M. Joly dit que ce portrait est tendancieux, on peut le suivre. Mais il faut prendre en considération qu'on a affaire à une polémique, et les lois de la polémique ne s'opposent pas, il me semble, à un portrait chargé. Le jugement sur l'acceptabilité du portrait dépendra, je crois, de l'attitude plus ou moins bienveillante du commentateur envers l'auteur.

Mais M. Joly fait une erreur évidente quand il en vient à expliquer [190] pourquoi Justin peint ici la philosophie d'une telle façon. Selon le savant belge, il y a une opposition entre ce passage et ce que Justin dit dans la discussion avec le vieillard (*Dial.* 3-6). En face du vieillard, dit M. Joly, Justin fait semblant d'être beaucoup plus favorable au Platonisme, c'est-à-dire à la philosophie, qu'ici. D'où vient cette différence d'attitude? Joly répond: «Justin, qui sait fort bien ce qu'il accorde au Platonisme, donne ici des gages à la faction antiphilosophique, qui devait constituer la grande majorité des chrétiens de l'époque». (p. 18-19). En d'autres termes, au début du dialogue (ch. 1,4-5), Justin veut montrer les dents à l'égard de la philosophie pour éviter des difficultés du côté de ses lecteurs simples, alors qu'il se montre plus favorable à la philosophie dans la suite du dialogue. Selon M. Joly, c'est une question de tactique.

Si cette observation était just, Justin ne pourrait guère échapper à l'accusation d'être malhonnête. Mais le commentateur s'est trompé. Car pourquoi Justin est-il plus favorable à l'égard du Platonisme dans sa discussion avec le vieillard? La réponse est simple: parce que à ce moment, Justin est encore Platonicien! Il défend le Platonisme contre les attaques du vieillard. Comme interlocuteur Justin est donc favorable à la philosophie. Mais la discussion elle-même n'est pas favorable à la philosophie. Car Justin se laisse convaincre par le vieillard que le Platonisme ne contient pas la vérité. En d'autres termes, ce passage aussi a un caractère anti-philosophique. Il n'y a donc aucune opposition entre ces deux parties du dialogue. M. Joly a-t-il été égaré par son attitude peu bienveillante envers Justin?

## TRUE PHILOSOPHY – ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

One of the most important features in the early history of Christianity is its confrontation with the Greek philosophical world. In the eyes of its opponents Christianity appears to be a new way of thinking, a new philosophy. Newness (νεωτερίζειν), however, was not a recommendation in those days. That is why the defenders of the Christian way of thinking were eager to show that their philosophy was an ancient one. The purpose of this article is to show, how this idea was elaborated by three great apologists, one of the second, one of the third and one of the fourth century, viz. Justin, Origen, Eusebius.

### *Justin's Dialogue*

About the year 160 Justin Martyr wrote his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. This is the first apology of the Christian faith which has come to us. Its argumentation develops in two phases: 1. The one true philosophy is not found in the Greek world but in the writings of the prophets of the Jews; 2. The writings of the prophets should not be interpreted in the manner to which the Jews were accustomed, but as the Christians interpret them. The belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Christ, is the hermeneutic key which opens the door to those who are in search of the true meaning of the holy books.

This argumentation begins with an assumption. When Trypho asks Justin what he thinks of philosophy, he gets the following answer: 'Philosophy is really the greatest and most honourable thing man can possess. It alone brings us to God and unites us with Him and truly holy are those who apply themselves to philosophy. What philosophy really is and why it was sent down to men have escaped the masses. Otherwise there would be no Platonists, Stoics, etc.' (*Dial.* 2, 1) Philosophy is something 'sent down to men'. Justin does not say by whom it was sent down, but it is evident that this must be a divine authority. He also does not disclose when it was sent down, but there can [196] be no doubt that he considers this divine activity as the beginning of philosophy.

Justin's statement also reveals his idea of the content of philosophy: 'it alone brings us to God and unites us with Him'. The core

of the true philosophy is knowledge of God, which brings man to unity with god. This is a recurrent theme in the dialogue. When Trypho appears to be interested in Greek philosophy, Justin reacts: 'How could you profit as much from philosophy as you do from your Lawgiver and the prophets?' Obviously he means to say: Moses and the prophets can teach you more about God than the Greek philosophers can. But Trypho answers: 'Do not all philosophers in all their discussions discuss God? Do they not investigate His sovereignty and providence on every occasion? And is inquiring about the divine not the task of philosophy?' In *Dial.* 2, 6 it is said that to see God is the aim of Plato's philosophy. Moreover in the discussion between Justin and the old man about Plato's philosophy Justin defines philosophy as ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ὄντος, 'knowledge of the being', which appears to be the equivalent of 'knowledge of God' (*Dial.* 3, 4-5). In the same passage philosophy is said to be 'the knowledge of what is true', a definition which refers to an expression found five times in the New Testament (1 Tim. 2, 4; 2 Tim. 2, 25 and 3, 7; Tit. 1, 7; Hebr. 10, 26).

Thus to Justin philosophy is knowledge of the *truth*; it primarily *concerns God*, obviously because, in his opinion, man's relation to God is of vital importance, and therefore knowledge of Him is the knowledge he needs most. This knowledge, this true philosophy, has been *sent down* to mankind in early times.

As was said above, Justin does not specify the latter assertion. His only concern, at least in this context, is to underline that the philosophy to which he adheres is old. For in his time antiquity was a guarantee of truth. (See now P. Pilhofer, *Presbyteron Kreitton*, Tübingen 1990).

In the course of the dialogue Justin's ideas become somewhat clearer. After the refutation by the old man of Platonism, on which Justin had built his hope, he exclaims: 'Where can I find a teacher who teaches me the truth?' The old man answers that it can be found in the prophets, 'who are the only ones who have seen the truth and disclosed it to men' (*Dial.* 7,1). 'They spoke by a divine spirit and predicted future events which are now taking place' (*ibid.*). If the prophets are *the only men* who have seen the truth and were inspired by a holy spirit, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that their knowledge must coincide with the true philosophy sent down to men.

The predictions of the prophets were fulfilled in Jesus, the

Christ. This means that to know Christ is to know the true philosophy. Hence having found Christ Justin can say; 'In this manner and for that reason I am a *philosopher*' (*Dial.* 8, 2).[197]

In his further dialogue with Trypho about the writings of Moses and the other prophets Justin states that wherever in those texts it is said that God speaks or appears, it is the pre-existent Christ who does so (*Dial.* 48, 1–3; 126, 1 ss. It was Christ who appeared to Moses by the oak of Mamre; it was also Christ who appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai). If, then, Justin states that the one true philosophy was sent down to men, there must be some connection between this statement and his utterances about the pre-existent Christ. This philosophy must originate from Christ. Justin does not, however, say this in clear terms. What he does say is that Christ spoke through the prophets. He also argues (in his *Apologies*) that the seeds of truth which are found in some Greek philosophers (Socrates and Heraclitus are names in *Apol.* 1. 46, 3; they were already 'Christians') are owed to Christ, the sowing Logos, the *Logos Spermatikos*. It is apparent that Justin intends to ascribe to Christ all truth found in mankind. Our conclusion that the true philosophy stems from the pre-existent Christ must be correct. Thus the roots of the Christian philosophy go back far into the past.

In Eusebius, as we shall see, similar ideas are found, but elaborated in a more perspicuous way.

#### *Origen against Celsus on the true Wisdom*

About the year 180 the Platonic philosopher Celsus wrote a book against the Christians, entitled 'Ἀληθὴς λόγος'. This title has given rise to much controversy. The question is whether the noun *logos* should be understood in a common, neutral sense or given a pregnant meaning. In the fifth volume of his Sources Chrétiennes edition of Origen's *Contra Celsum* (S.C. 227) Borret gives a survey of the different points of view. The title is rendered by Keim as '*Wahres Wort*' and by Pélagaud as '*Livre de Vérité*'. According to these authors the emphasis in this title is on ἀληθής: Celsus announces that he is going to tell the truth. Borret adheres to this opinion and renders '*Discours véritable*'. 'Celse annoncerait, par ce fragment (I 12) comme par le titre, son intention de dire la vérité, et de la dire aux chrétiens, sur les chrétiens et contre les chrétiens' (p. 26).

Borret acknowledges that Celsus appeals to a large heathen

tradition which has been 'crystallized' in Hellenism (p. 199). But the title of Celsus' book does not refer to this theory.

Other scholars are of the opposite opinion. They think that by 'the true logos' Celsus means 'the ancient logos', about which he speaks in the fragment, quoted by Origen in *Contra Celsum* I 14 and translated by H. Chadwick as follows: 'There is *an ancient doctrine* which has existed from the beginning, which has always been maintained by the wisest nations and cities and wise men'. This opinion was defended by A. Wifstrand in a study entitled 'Die wahre Lehre des Kelsos' (*Bulletin de la Société Royale des Lettres de Lund*, 1941-1942, V, p. 391-431). This 'true doctrine' is found in the 'wisest nations [198] and cities and wise men'. For 'wisest nations' Celsus gives the names 'Egyptians, Assyrians, Indians, Persians, Odrysians, Samothracians, and Eleusinians'. (Obviously the first three are named because of their philosophy, the others because of their mysteries; on account of the final two the term 'cities' was added in the first quotation). This ancient doctrine was, of course, meant by Borret where he spoke of a large heathen tradition.

Clearly the term 'doctrine' does not indicate a set of dogmata here. Celsus intends to say that those ancient nations and those men of ancient times possessed a certain *wisdom*. Hence he speaks of 'the *wisest* nations and cities and *wise* men'. It seems to me that the translation of 'logos' by 'doctrine' (Lehre) is therefore, not precise. I would suggest that Ἀληθὴς λόγος be rendered by 'True wisdom', this true wisdom being found among the wise nations and wise men of ancient times.

One may object that, if Celsus had wished to speak of 'wisdom', he had the term '*sophia*' at his disposal. This is, of course, true, but perhaps he had a special reason for using 'logos' in an attack on Christianity. Was Christ not called 'Logos'? And was not Celsus by his theory of the ancient logos perhaps opposing Justin's theory of the one true philosophy sent down to men? At any rate Celsus' theory shows that Justin's idea about the origin of the true philosophy was not so extravagant as it may possibly appear to modern thinkers.

Origen, who wrote a refutation of Celsus treatise about 70 years later, does not object to his idea of an ancient wisdom. Himself an adherent of such an idea, he accuses Celsus of being unfair in excluding the Jews from the list of very wise nations (and Moses from the list of very wise men). He advises Celsus to take as his

example Numenius and others, who did do the Jews justice (*Contra Celsum* I 15). In Origen's opinion the holy books of the Jews contained the ancient wisdom which Celsus was looking for. In this he follows in the footsteps of Justin.

One wonders how Celsus, who holds the wisdom of old nations and men in such high esteem sees the Greek philosophy in relationship to that wisdom? An answer to this question is found in *Contra Celsum* I 2. Origen states: 'Celsus praises the barbarians for being capable of discovering doctrines; but he adds to this that the Greeks are better able to judge the value (κρίναι) of what the barbarians have discovered and to establish the doctrines (βεβαιώσασθαι) and to put them in practice by virtue (ἀσκήσαι πρὸς ἀρετήν)' (tr. Chadwick). In other words the Greeks are better able to give a rational foundation to the doctrines of the barbarians (*i.e.* those ancient nations mentioned above) and to put them into a virtuous practice. The first part of this statement will hardly amaze the reader, for rationalization is characteristic for Greek philosophy. That Greek philosophy has virtue as its objective, is a remarkable observation, which shows that for Celsus at least this was the case. [199] One should, however, not forget that *eudaimonia* was the aim of Plato's philosophy, of which ἀρετή is an essential prerequisite.

Origen reacts to these statements of Celsus by saying that the fundamental truths of Christianity can stand the test of a Greek proof. In *Contra Celsum* I 9–11 he will elaborate this (see Borret *ad loc.*).

In Origen's view, however, the true philosophy is found in the holy scriptures. An interesting text in this connection is the prologue of his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. There he states that the three books of Solomon, viz. *Proverbia*, *Ecclesiastes* and *Canticum Canticorum* correspond to the general disciplines which are called by the Greeks *ethica*, *physica*, *epoptice* (the GCS edition reads *enoptice*, which should be corrected, cf. P. Hadot, in *Porphyry*, coll. «Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique» 12, p. 128), and which in Latin can be rendered as *moralis*, *naturalis*, *inspectiva*. He elaborates this idea as follows:

Solomon ergo tres istas, quas supra diximus generales esse disciplinas, id est moralem, naturalem, inspectivam, distinguere ab invicem ac secernere volens tribus eas libellis edidit suo quoque ordine singulis consequenter aptatis. Primo ergo in Proverbiis moralem docuit locum succinctis, ut decuit, brevibusque sententiis vitae instituta componens. Secundum vero, qui naturalis appellatur,

comprehendit in Ecclesiaste, in quo multa de rebus naturalibus disserens et inania ac vana ab utilibus necessariisque secernens relinquendam vanitatem monet et utilia rectaque sectanda. Inspec-tivum quoque locum in hoc libello tradidit qui habetur in manibus, id est in Cantico Canticorum, in quo amorem caelestium divino-rumque desiderium incutit animae sub specie sponsae ac sponsi, caritatis et amoris viis perveniendum docens ad consortium Dei (GCS *Origenes Werke* Band 8, Leipzig 1925, p. 76, 4–16).

This text shows clearly how the holy scriptures are, in the view of the early Christians, *the* handbook of philosophy. This is, of course, a consequence of what in the foregoing pages has been said about the one true philosophy sent down to men and found in the words of Moses and the prophets.

According to Origen, the Greek philosophers got their wisdom from the same source:

Haec ergo, ut mihi videtur, sapientes quique Graecorum sumpta a Solomone, utpote qui aetate et tempore longe ante ipsos prior ea per Dei spiritum didicisset, tamquam propria inventa protulerunt et institutionum suarum voluminibus comprehensa posteris quoque tradenda reliquere. Sed haec, ut diximus, Solomon ante omnes invenit et docuit per sapientiam, quam accepit a Deo (*Ibid* p. 75, 23–27).

There is one source of wisdom, God; the holy scriptures, i.e. Solomon, contains it.[200]

#### *Eusebius' Demonstration of the Gospel*

In about 315 Eusebius composed an apology for Christianity in a huge work, which consists of two part, the Προπαρασκευὴ εὐαγγελική and the Ἀπόδειξις εὐαγγελική, mostly quoted by the Latin names: *Praeparatio Evangelica* and *Demonstratio Evangelica*. That the two are meant as one work appears from the fact that in the opening sentence of the *Praeparatio* Eusebius declares that by the present treatise he intends to give a *Demonstratio Evangelica*. Thus the whole work could be entitled with the title of the second part. (About the exact meaning of this title there may be difference of opinion. Is the Gospel subject or object of the Demonstration? In the second case one should translate 'Demonstration for the Gospel' as Quasten does in his *Patrology* (III, p. 329). But it is quite possible that Eusebius intends to say that the Gospel itself shows the truth of the Christian faith. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that in par. 2 of the proem to the *Demonstratio* Eusebius speaks of the εὐαγγελικὴ ἀπόδειξις of the Saviour. Thus the Saviour proves the

truth of the Gospel. In the same manner one could say that the gospel proves its truth. However this may be, the title *Praeparatio Evangelica* means 'The Preparation for the Gospel', or, as Eusebius formulates in *Praep. Ev.* VI 10, 49 'The Preparation for the Proof of the Gospel'.

The general structure of Eusebius' work agrees with that of Justin's Dialogue. He first answers to the reproach of the Greeks: 'why did you, Christians, relinquish the ancestral traditions and become adherents of the Jewish fabrications?' Then he confronts the reproaches of the Hebrews, who say: 'How can you take possession of our holy books and evict us out from that possession?' (see *Praep. Ev.* I 2). Eusebius' answer to these questions can be formulated in the two theses of Justin, mentioned in the beginning of this article.

The fifteen books of the *Praeparatio* are devoted to the first question. By quoting a large number of texts of heathen authors—this is Eusebius' own way of arguing—he shows the deficiency of the heathen religion and philosophy. And wherever the latter contains the truth, it has been stolen, Eusebius says, from holy books of the Jews.

Eusebius pays special attention to the objection of the Greek philosophers (Porphyry, but also already Celsus) that the belief of the Christian would be without a rational foundation (*Praep.* I 1, 11; II 2, 4; *Demonstr.* I 1, 9). Here Eusebius follows in the footsteps of Origen in *Contra Celsum* I 9, arguing that the improvement of life and morals caused by the Christian faith is a great argument in favour of its truth (*Praep. Ev.* I 4). He also draws attention to the fact that the suggestion of the philosophers that they themselves rely on reason and proof, while the Christians have nothing but belief without reason, is incorrect. Just as Origen does, Eusebius argues that all human life depends on [201] faith (and hope) (*Praep. Ev.* I 5, 9; cf. *Contra Celsum* I 11), which applies no less to philosophy than to any other activity.

In his answer to the Jews the Christian belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah, of course plays the decisive role.

So far Eusebius' method of arguing did not differ much from that of Justin and Origen. He does have an interesting new idea about the origin of Christianity. Christianity, he states (for instance in *Dem. Ev.* I 2), is neither Hellenism nor Judaism but is a religion with its own characteristic stamp; it is not something novel or

extravagant but something very ancient; it was familiar to the men before Moses' time who were dear to God because of their piety and justice; it is a very ancient way of pious living (παλαιότατον εὐσεβείας πολίτευμα), a very ancient form of philosophy (ἀρχαιοτάτη τις φιλοσοφία). It is this way of life that our Saviour and Lord has raised up anew after its long sleep, in accordance with Moses' own prophecies and those of the other prophets (cf. tr. by W.J. Ferrar, *Eusebius, The Proof of the Gospel*).

What is interesting in this theory is that the old philosophy sent down to men, about which Justin spoke, has now been 'localized'.

It is clear that also for Eusebius religion (εὐσέβεια) and philosophy are a unity. In *Praep. Ev.* I 6 he gives his view on the history of religion. Only a small number of men, who are mentioned in the writings of the Hebrews, had a pure mental eye and were able to rise above the cosmos and to revere the Creator, God. These are, of course, the Patriarchs.

The Phoenicians and the Egyptians were the first to give divine honour to the heavenly elements. This kind of worship is an aberration, but in Eusebius' view it is pardonable. In *Dem. Ev.* IV 8 he argues that the angels who were the guardians of the other nations had allowed them to worship the visible heavenly bodies because they were not able with their mind to see the invisible, nor to ascend so high through their weakness (cf. tr. Ferrar). In *Dial.* 55, 9 Justin also makes a distinction between the worship of the sun and the stars on the one hand and the proper idolatry, the worship of images, on the other. (See also Philo, *Decal.* 66)

This worship of images is the most serious error of mankind. It is the work of the demons, who by this practice draw the worship, which only belongs to God, to themselves. One can also put it in this way: it was the demons who alienated mankind from the one true philosophy. When Christ came to redeem human beings from the power of the demons, this was in fact a restoration of the ancient philosophy.

## WHAT IS LOVE? *EROS AND AGAPE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT*

In about the year 240 Origen, one of the great early Christian thinkers, writes a commentary on the Song of Songs of Solomon. This commentary reflects a process which can be referred to as 'the encounter between Christian thought and the thought of the Greek world', a world which Christianity had entered from the very beginning of its existence.

I take Christian thought to mean the rational reflection by which Christian believers try to explain their faith. The world of Greek thought can be defined as the way of thinking which was taught by the Greek philosophers and which had spread over a large part of the then inhabited world, the *oikoumene*, in the time of which we are speaking (the third century). It was an important facet, perhaps the most important, of Alexander the Great's spiritual legacy, a legacy which is referred to by the name 'Hellenism'.

My aim in this paper is to develop some ideas about the 'encounter' between two concepts which each represent a fundamental element in the worldviews corresponding to these two worlds, *eros* and *agape*. But first let us take a closer look at the person in whose work this encounter takes place.

### *Origen's intellectual background*

Origen was born in c. 185 in the city of Hellenism *par excellence*, Alexandria in Egypt, named after Alexander himself. He was a Christian by birth. His father was martyred in the persecution of 202 under Emperor Severus, and we are told in Eusebius' great *Ecclesiastical History* (VI, 1, 5) that he would have joined his father had his mother not hidden his clothes.

From an early age Origen avidly studied the foundation of the Christian faith, the Bible, and as a young man he was appointed a teacher at a catechetical school. He also took tuition in Greek philosophy under a man who is called the father of Neoplatonism, Ammonius Saccas. Saccas was the teacher of Plotinus, who in the middle of the third century developed a new form of Plato's doctrine, the 'New Platonism'.

In this way Origen's thinking combined two elements, Christian faith and reflection on its content on the one hand and Greek philosophical thinking on the other. Origen was not the first thinker to undergo this process. It had earlier taken place in Clement of Alexandria, his predecessor in the school, and probably in the latter's teacher, Pantaenus. Moreover, a similar development had occurred in the Jewish thinker Philo, who was also from Alexandria. In his case the encounter was between Jewish faith and Greek philosophical thinking. His *œuvre* consists largely of commentaries on the 'Law', the books of Moses, which he explains in terms derived from Greek philosophy. Philo, who lived in the time of Jesus, met with little response in the Jewish world. The vicissitudes of the Jewish people, particularly in Palestine, stood in the way of such an encounter. But Philo's approach was followed by the early Christian thinkers of Alexandria, and especially by Origen.

I am tempted to dwell on the subject of Philo here. Let me only say this. In Philo's explanation of Scripture allegory plays an important role. This is based on the conviction that the Scripture say 'something more' than what the words denote at first sight, that a deeper meaning lies hidden under the surface of the text. In this regard Philo was in the company of many philosophers of his time, first of all the Stoics, but also the Platonists. They applied allegory to explain the Greek myths and the works of the ancient poets, Homer and Hesiod.<sup>1</sup> We shall see how Origen follows the same path.

It is also relevant to note that Origen, like Philo, studies the Jewish holy books with the help of the Greek translation of these writings which was made in Alexandria in the third century BC, the translation of the Seventy, the Septuagint.<sup>2</sup> There are many miraculous stories about the origin of this translation. They show how great its authority was. It was by means of this translation that

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<sup>1</sup> The best known work on this material is J. Pépin, *Mythe et Allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*. Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1958; nouvelle ed. 1976.

<sup>2</sup> For more than ten years the Septuagint has been studied by a group of scholars led by Prof. Marguerite Harl in Paris. In 1986 she published an annotated French translation of the book of Genesis under the title *La Bible d'Alexandrie*. In 1988 Gilles Dorival, Marguerite Harl, and Oliver Munnich published a kind of handbook for the study of the Septuagint, entitled *La Bible grecque des Septantes. Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*. Translations of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy have now also appeared, all published by Éditions du Cerf, Paris.

the Christians appropriated the holy books of the Jews. They believed that they were entitled to do so because the prophecies about the Messiah had been fulfilled in Jesus. This conviction also formed the basis of the allegorical interpretation which the early Christians gave to Scripture.

*Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs*

Origen, then, writes a commentary on the Song of Songs. He regards it as a wedding song, written by Solomon in the form of a play. It places on the stage a bride and a bridegroom, who are accompanied by a chorus of women and men friends respectively. The bridegroom, Origen says immediately (*Prologue* I, 1), is the Word of God (*Sermo Dei*), the bride, who is filled with a heavenly love on her wedding day, is either the soul which is made in the image of God's Word or the Church. So, besides the literal sense, Origen finds in this text two deeper meanings: the relationship of love between the Word of God and the Church, or that between the Word of God and the soul. In this way the whole work is seen by Origen to have a mystic content.<sup>3</sup> As I said, this interpretation connects Origen with an exegetical tradition which goes back via Philo to Stoic philosophy.

However, before interpreting the text of the Song of Songs, Origen discusses some preliminary matters. The first question he wants to deal with is: what about the concept which obviously plays a major role in the Song of Songs: love? Origen wants to speak *de natura amoris*. (I use Latin terms, although Origen wrote in Greek; Origen's words have not been passed down to us in the original language but in a Latin translation by Rufinus, who formed a famous translating partnership with Jerome in the years around 400.)

Why does Origen bring up this preliminary question of what love really is? One of the reasons is that he has observed that the Song of Songs and other places in the Bible use for 'love' the term *agape*, together with the related verb, whereas Greek philosophy, in particular Plato, has the term *eros* for this disposition. By putting it this way I have already indicated that, in Origen's view, biblical

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<sup>3</sup> Totumque eius corpus mysticis formatur eloquiis (*Prol.* 1, 3). I follow the text of the Source Chrétiennes edition by Brésard-Crouzel-Borret (S.C. 375, Paris 1991).

*agape* and philosophical *eros* are one and the same reality, a view which was severely criticized in later times.

In what follows I will show (1) how Origen elaborates his view of *eros* and *agape*, and (2) what criticisms it attracted and how these criticisms should be evaluated. In this context I will also pay attention to the developments of the notion of *eros* in later Platonism and to the influence which Origen's view exercised on the author hidden behind the name Dionysius the Areopagite, who exerted such a strong influence on medieval thinking.

### *Eros and agape in Origen*

Origen starts his discussion of love with the following words:

'Among the Greeks a multitude of learned men who were in pursuit of the truth have produced many and varied writings about the nature of love, including some written in the manner of dialogues. They attempted to demonstrate that the power of love is none other than that which transports the soul from the earth up to the high vaults of heaven, and that it is only possible to attain the highest state of felicity if one is summoned forth by the desire of love.

We are told that discussions on this matter were put forward during a kind of banquet. These took place, I believe, among men whose banquet consisted not of food but rather of words.

Other authors have also bequeathed to us writings in which certain methods were outlined by which this love seemed to be aroused or increased. But these methods have been appropriated by carnal men in order to serve their corrupt desires and the secrets acts of a culpable love.'<sup>4</sup>

Anyone who is familiar with Greek literature will immediately understand that, in his description of what these many Greek authors had to say, Origen focuses on one author, Plato, and

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<sup>4</sup> *Prol.* 2, 1, Apud Graecos quidem plurimi eruditorum virorum volentes investigare veritatis indaginem, de amoris natura multa ac diversa etiam dialogorum stilo scripta protulerunt, conantes ostendere non aliud esse amoris vim nisi quae animam de terris ad fastigia caeli celsa perducatur, nec ad summam posse beatitudinem perveniri nisi amoris desiderio provocante. Sed et quaestiones de hoc quasi in conviviis propositae referuntur, inter eos, puto, inter quos non ciborum, sed verborum convivium gerebatur. Alii vero etiam artes quasdam quibus amor hic in anima gigni vel augeri posse videretur, conscriptas reliquerunt. Sed has artes carnales homines ad vitiosa desideria et culpabilis amoris mysteria traxerunt. The division into paragraphs is that of Luc Brésard in *Sources Chrétiennes*, no. 375.

especially on his discussions of ἔρως in the dialogues, the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. The first describes a banquet, for which Origen uses the phrase *quasi in conviviiis*; from the second Origen borrows the expression *ad fastigia caeli celsa* (ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπουράνιον ἀψίδα, *Phdr.* 247a8-b1). And when Origen says that only this *amor* can lead to supreme felicity, he must be thinking of what Plato says in the *Symposium* (205a1-3): that the ultimate goal of *eros* is felicity (εὐδαιμονία). Finally, it is important to note that Origen talks about a *desiderium amoris*, 'a desire of love'. Plato, too, characterizes love as *desire* in various places.<sup>5</sup>

We should begin by observing that the *amor* of which Origen speaks in Rufinus' translation is Plato's ἔρως. We need to assume that Origen also used this term here, and that this applies to the other texts in which Rufinus translates *amor*.

A further question is: are Origen's pronouncements on *eros* in agreement with Plato's view? I believe that he has in fact gone to the heart of Plato's view of *eros*. This should be briefly explained.

The first meaning of ἔρως is 'sexual desire'. Plato's most penetrating discussion of *eros*, in which the prophetess Diotima acts as his mouthpiece, says that the first impulse to *eros* is found in the love of boys. In this love the man is attracted by the physical beauty of the youth. But *eros* here does not move in the direction of what we would call the erotic. Rather this *eros* strives to produce beauty in the loved one by stimulating beautiful words and beautiful thoughts (*Symp.* 210a7-8). Next, the lover will direct his view on physical beauty in general, only to discover that the beauty in the soul is to be valued higher than that of the body. By means of beautiful actions and beautiful insights *eros* will achieve its goal in the contemplation of the beautiful itself (*Symp.* 211b5-d1).<sup>6</sup>

What Plato does here is analyse man as a creature of desire. Man's desire is essentially aimed at beauty (and goodness). When this desire develops in the proper way, it will ultimately contemplate beauty itself. Plato talks about this contemplation in terms reminiscent of the mysteries. When Origen, following Plato's *Phaedrus*, talks about the 'high vaults of heaven', to which *eros*

<sup>5</sup> The clearest place is *Phdr.* 237d3-4: ὅτι μὲν οὖν δὴ ἐπιθυμία τις ὁ ἔρως, ἅπαντι δῆλον. Cf. *Symp.* 207a7; and also 200e4-5.

<sup>6</sup> For a broader examination of Plato's discussions of *eros* in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, see A.E. Taylor, *Plato, The man and his work*, New York 1957, ch. ix The *Symposium*, ch. xii The *Phaedrus*; and S.J. Ridderbos, *Eros bij Plato naar zijn Symposium en Phaedrus, met een vertaling*, Kampen 1988.

leads the soul, he is expressing the same in figurative language.

The view of man expounded by Plato here is onesided to a certain degree. The element of ἡδονή is left out of account. Plato will introduce this element into his discussions elsewhere (the *Philebus*). It is the same one-sided emphasis that we find in the *Phaedo*, where the subject is the human soul. There, too, Plato's almost exclusive interest is in the soul's relationship with the Ideas, i.e. in man's intellectual faculty. In both cases he was fascinated by a vision; in both cases this vision exerted a tremendous influence on the reflection on man's nature in later times.

When Rufinus renders *eros* as *amor* and we follow him by translating this most difficult term as 'love', we should realize what the point at issue here is. What is love here?<sup>7</sup> R. A. Markus has put it as follows: 'In the most general terms *eros* is a cosmic principle of orientation, the source and impulse to movement and activity'.<sup>8</sup> Plato is convinced that there is a power in all things—not only in man—which impels everything to its goal; in everything there is, so to speak, a desire to reach this goal and this desire is called *eros*. When we translate this term as 'love', we are using figurative language. In such a case there seems to be a great distance between *eros* and the Christian *agape*. However, in what follows we shall see that in the time after Plato the notion of *eros* moves more in the direction of what love really is.

Before reviewing Origen's discussion of the term *agape*, we must briefly look at the last paragraph of Origen's text quoted above (*Prol.* 2, 1). It states that there were authors who had devised methods or techniques to develop *eros*—as Plato saw it—in the soul. Origen notes that these writings were used by 'carnal people' (*carnales homines*) as a pretext to follow their sensual appetites.<sup>9</sup> In these

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<sup>7</sup> The title of this paper 'What is love' had already been chosen when my fellow Franciscan Theo Zweerman, emeritus Professor of Spirituality at Utrecht Theological University, drew my attention to a number of modern discussions of *Eros*, including a collection of articles published by the Rabanus Maurus Academy, Fulda-Limburg-Mainz, entitled *Was heisst Liebe: Zur Tradition eines Begriffes* (Frankfurt am Main 1982). See also H. Kuhn, *Liebe. Geschichte eines Begriffes* (München 1975); F.-J. Nocke, *Liebe, Tod und Auferstehung. Über die Mitte des Glaubens* (München 1978); J.B. Lotz, s.j., *Die Dreieinheit der Liebe. Eros-Philia-Agape* (Frankfurt am Main, Knecht, 1979).

<sup>8</sup> See A.H. Armstrong and R.A. Markus, *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy*. London 1960, p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> One might think of a book like that of the rhetor Diophanes, in which he wrote a defence of Alcibiades' attitude in the *Symposium* and taught that, in order to learn virtue, one must oblige the loving teacher. When Diophanes

people *eros* moves in the direction of what is now called the erotic, the sensual love which Plato saw as a deviation from man's proper goal. In connection with the behaviour of these 'carnal people' Origen points out that what happened to the Greeks—those clever Greeks —, who misunderstood the texts about *eros*, can also happen to the Christians in relation to *agape*, for instance in the interpretation of the tender expressions of the bride and bridegroom in the Song of Songs.

For a proper understanding of this kind of text, says Origen, it is important to bear in mind the distinction which Paul draws between the inner and the outer man. The biblical words can be understood in relation to the inner and the outer man. The outer man will be led by an earthly desire (*cupido*) or love (*amor*), the inner man by a heavenly desire or love. It is good to observe Origen's language closely here. In his view, there is an earthly *cupido* and *amor* and a heavenly *cupido* and *amor*. Obviously the Song of Songs talks about the heavenly *cupido* or *amor*, for which it almost invariably uses the word *agape*. The conclusion must be that for Origen *amor* and *agape* refer to the same reality.

It is the case, therefore, that before Origen starts to talk about *agape*—in translation *caritas* or *delictio*—he takes *eros* and *agape* to be equivalent. But this means that he has to explain why the Bible almost never uses the term *eros* but always uses *agape* instead.

Origen believes that the Bible speaks of *agape* for pedagogical reasons. The term *eros* could lead to misunderstandings among simple readers. Origen evidently means that the thoughts of these readers could turn towards the erotic. To prevent this, he says the Bible uses for what wise people of this world call *cupido* or *amor* (= *eros*) a *honestius vocabulum*,<sup>10</sup> a more distinguished, more attractive word, namely *caritas* or *dilectio* (*agape*).<sup>11</sup>

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read this work in the presence of Plotinus, the latter was highly indignant and ordered Porphyry to write a refutation (see *Vita Plotini*, chap. 15).

<sup>10</sup> It would be interesting to know what term Origen used here. Perhaps a clue can be found in Dionysius the Areopagite, who deals with the same subject in *De divinis nominibus* iv 12 and says that ἀγάπησις is a term which sounds εὐφημότερον than ἔρως. The term εὐφημος is very apt in this connection: ἀγάπη 'sounds good', does not have improper overtones, as ἔρως has in the ears of those who are weaker! (See PG 3, 709c9-10; the full stop after κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν εὐφημότερον should be removed.) Prof. D.T. Runia suggested that Origen may have used the term ἐπιεικής.

<sup>11</sup> *Prol.* 2, 20, Videtur autem mihi quod divina Scriptura, volens cavere ne lapsus aliquis legentibus sub amoris nomine nasceretur, pro infirmioribus

However, this does not mean a rejection of *eros*, as is proved for Origen by the fact that the Bible itself uses *eros* terminology. This happens, he says, where there is no risk of misunderstanding, for instance when the Bible talks about *amor sapientiae* 'love of wisdom', of course, excludes the idea of something inferior (*Prol.* 2, 23). Origen goes on to conclude: 'So it makes no difference at all whether the Bible uses *amor* or *caritas* or *dilectio*', but he immediately adds to this conclusion: 'except that the term *caritas* is awarded such honour that even God himself is called *caritas*, according to the words of John: "Beloved, let us love each other, for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God; he who does not love does not know God, for God is love"' (1 John 4:7-8).<sup>12</sup>

The change in the train of thought introduced by the words 'except that' is remarkable. At first sight it seems that Origen does find a difference here between *eros* and *agape*. God is called *agape*, not *eros*. Is there an important distinction after all? On further consideration, however, this does not appear to be what Origen means. By adding this qualification he wishes only to draw attention to the biblical text which must form the starting-point of all discussions of *agape*: 'God is love'. This love which God is, is also in him who is from God, his Son Jesus Christ,<sup>13</sup> and this love of God was given to man so that he may strive to follow God and care for his fellow human beings.<sup>14</sup>

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quibusque eum qui apud sapientes saeculi cupido seu amor dicitur, honestiore vocabulo caritatem vel dilectionem nominasse. The editors of the Sources Chrétiennes edition note here: 'Selon la distinction fréquente aujourd'hui, ἀγάπη dénote plutôt un amour de bienveillance, oblatif et désintéressé: l'amour de dilection. "Ἐρως est au contraire l'amour passion, l'amour des amants. Mais ici, Origène oppose simplement par leur object ἀγάπη, l'amour spirituel à ἔρως, l'amour charnel'. Though this remark shows that the authors do not agree with Nygren's view (see below p. (295)), they do maintain that there is a contrast between *eros* and *agape*, whereas Origen says here very clearly that this is merely a question of different terms. Further on in the text, too, Origen leaves no doubt that the two terms mean the same (see the texts quoted in n. 12, 14, and 15).

<sup>12</sup> Nihil ergo interest, in scripturis divinis utrum amor dicatur an caritas an dilectio, nisi quod in tantum nomen caritatis extollitur ut etiam Deus ipse caritas appelletur, sicut Iohannes dicit: *Carissimi, diligamus invicem, quia caritas ex Deo est, et omnis qui diligit ex Deo natus est et cognoscit Deum; qui autem non diligit non cognoscit Deum, quia Deus caritas est* (*Prol.* 2, 25).

<sup>13</sup> In quo (= the text in John) ostendit et ipsum Deum caritatem esse, et iterum eum qui ex Deo est caritatem esse. Quis autem ex Deo est nisi ille qui dicit: *Ego ex Deo exivi et veni in hunc mundum?* (John 11:28) (*Prol.* 2, 26).

<sup>14</sup> Igitur sciendum est Dei caritatem semper ad Deum tendere, a quo

This is the view of the life and striving of the believer as developed by Origen: man was given the love which God is as a power that drives him back to God and also leads him to adopt a caring attitude towards his fellow men. This view of *agape* aligns Origen with Plato's view of *eros* (or that of later Platonism), and he apparently sees so much similarity that he can say: therefore all that has been written about the *caritas* you should take as if written about *amor*, without being concerned about the question of terms; for in both the same meaning is revealed?<sup>15</sup> And he adds that man's relationship with God can be said to involve both *amor* and *dilectio* (= *caritas*); just as John calls God *caritas*, so He can also be called *eros*.<sup>16</sup>

### *Evaluation*

It is clear that we are dealing here with a fascinating encounter between Greek philosophical and Christian thinking. But how is Origen's position to be judged?

The most famous criticism of Origen's view is that of the Lutheran scholar and later bishop, Anders Nygren. In his book on '*Eros and agape*' he puts forward the proposition—which he defends in impressive fashion—that Origen (and later Christian authors) brought about a synthesis of Christian and Greek philosophical thinking in which Christian *agape* effectively merged into *eros*. Greek *eros*, says Nygren, is essentially egocentric,

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originem ducit, et ad proximum respicere, cum quo participium gerit, utpote similiter creatum in incorruptione (*Prol.* 2, 32).

<sup>15</sup> 'Sic ergo quaecumque de caritate scripta sunt, quasi de amore dicta suscipe nihil de nominibus curans; eadem namque in utroque virtus ostenditur (*Prol.* 2, 33). Initially I translated the last words as follows: 'For both words refer to the same *virtus* (excellence, power)'. However, Prof. G.R.F.M. Nuchelmans pointed out to me that *virtus* can also be interpreted as 'meaning'. In that case Origen would be saying that *amor* and *caritas* are synonyms, whereas my first translation need not imply more than a similar extensional meaning. I do not know whether Origen was aware of this distinction. It could be that my initial translation also indicates synonymy for Origen. I follow Nuchelmans's suggestion in my translation because Origen in any case means synonymy. Moreover, '*in utroque*' is more consistent with meaning as the notional content which manifests itself *in* both words, whereas my original translation, as Nuchelmans rightly remarks, would rather be covered by '*utroque*' (without *in*).

<sup>16</sup> Non ergo interest utrum amari dicatur Deus aut diligere, nec puto quod culpari possit, si quis Deum, sicut Iohannes *caritatem*, ita ipse amorem nominet (*Prol.* 2, 36).

whereas *agape* disinterested, giving, altruistic. Origen sacrificed *agape* to *eros*. Nygren talks about a synthesis between the two, but it rather seems that, in his view, *agape* has been subsumed into *eros*.<sup>17</sup>

Nygren never tires of pointing out that *eros* in Plato stands for 'desire', a yearning to obtain something, where Christian *agape* is a giving love. These, he says, represent two different spiritual, indeed religious, attitudes. Nygren's view has found a great deal of support, especially among theologians. The idea that *agape* is something specifically Christian obviously made this view very attractive to them.

There has also been a great deal of resistance to this position, especially from philosophers. They have pointed out that Plato's *eros* is not as egocentric as Nygren would have us believe. *Eros* is essentially love of beauty, and this love also wants to foster beauty in the loved one, as we already saw above in the first phase of the effect of *eros*.<sup>18</sup> And this attitude also characterizes the higher phases. Criticism of Nygren has been voiced by authorities on Plato like Markus,<sup>19</sup> Armstrong,<sup>20</sup> Rist,<sup>21</sup> and in the Netherlands Cornelia de Vogel.<sup>22</sup> Gregory Vlastos has given a very clear exposition of the distinctive nature of Plato's *eros*.<sup>23</sup> *Eros*, he says, is not egocentric, as Nygren believes, but it is also not directly aimed at the other either. *Eros* is ideocentric (i.e. aimed at beauty itself, the

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<sup>17</sup> Nygren's work consists of two parts. He deals with the idea of synthesis in the second part, published in 1937. The work, written in Swedish, has been translated into French, German, English, and other languages. I have used the French translation by P. Junot (1941).

<sup>18</sup> See above p. (5).

<sup>19</sup> R.A. Markus, 'The Dialectic of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*', *Downside Review* no. 233, 1955, pp. 219–30 summarized in chapter vii of the work cited in n. 6.

<sup>20</sup> A.H. Armstrong, 'Platonic *Eros* and Christian *agape*', *Downside Review*, no. 255, 1961 (reprinted in *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, Variorum Reprints, 1979, article no. IX); and 'Platonic Love. A reply to Professor Verdenius', *Downside Review*, no. 268, 1964 (in: *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, no.X).

<sup>21</sup> J.M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, Toronto 1964; see also his article 'A Note on *Eros* and *Agape* in Pseudo-Dionysius', *Vigiliae Christianae* 20, 1966, 235–242.

<sup>22</sup> C.J. de Vogel, 'Greek Cosmic Love and the Christian Love of God. Boethius, Dionysius the Areopagite and the Author of the Fourth Gospel', *Vigiliae Christianae* 35, 1981, 57–81.

<sup>23</sup> G. Vlastos, 'The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato', in G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies*, Princeton, 1973, 1981<sup>2</sup>, 3–34. See further L.A. Kosman, 'Platonic Love', in W.H. Werkmeister (ed.), *Facets of Plato's Philosophy*, Assen 1976, 53–69; A.W. Price, 'Loving Persons Platonically', *Phronesis* 26, 1981, 23–34; *Idem*, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford, 1989.

idea), and hence creative, i.e. it wants to produce beauty in the other, and to this extent *eros* is giving.

Another fundamental rejection of Origen's view came from Heinrich Scholz in his book *Eros and Caritas* (1929). He believes that Origen made a radical mistake by identifying *eros* and *agape*. The nub of his criticism is expressed in the following statement: 'Denn der Begriff einer Gottesliebe, zu der Gott selbst das Subject ist, ist in jeder platonischen Metaphysik eine krasse Absurdität'.<sup>24</sup> This statement does not seem unfounded as regards Plato himself, since *eros* is always 'desire' in Plato. Desire implies lack and so is inappropriate to the divine. This is explicitly asserted by Plato in *Symposium* 204a1-2. So there seems to be a great discrepancy between Plato's *eros* and Christian *agape*. But when Scholz emphatically claims that a love of which God himself is the subject is a 'crass absurdity' in any Platonic metaphysics, I believe he is wrong.

Various authors (De Vogel, Armstrong, Rist) have pointed out in this connection that Plotinus says in one place that the highest principle, the One, is worthy of love (ἐράσμιον) and is love itself (ἔρωσ ἀντός) and love for itself (αὐτοῦ ἔρωσ).<sup>25</sup> On the basis of Plotinus' other statements we can assume that the One itself is said to be ἔρωσ (love) here, but not that love is irradiated from the One to the lower things that proceed from the One. Plotinus is unable to say anything about this origination of lower things from the One. In his view, the One does not bear any real relationship to what flows from it. In any case we may be certain that ἔρωσ cannot mean 'desire' here. What could the One desire? The One, raised above being and thought, cannot suffer want. We can infer that *eros* has undergone a change in this context. It seems that the One is 'love' and has 'love for itself'. This considerably reduces the gap between *eros* and *agape*.

This gap becomes even smaller in the later Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus (5th century). He does attribute to the deity (though he is not the highest God)<sup>26</sup> an ἔρωσ προνοητικός, a caring, providential love, to which man responds with a corresponding ἔρωσ ἐπιστρεπτικός, a love that turns to God. This brings us even closer to a love which proceeds from God, as *agape* does.

<sup>24</sup> *Eros und Caritas. Die platonische Liebe und die Liebe im Sinne des Christentums*. Halle 1929, S. 56.

<sup>25</sup> *Enn.* VI 8 [39], 15, 1.

<sup>26</sup> See C.J. De Vogel, *art. cit.*

Of course, Proclus lived considerably later than Origen, but it may be safely assumed that in Origen's time the beginning was taking place of a movement in Platonic philosophy which allowed him to make the transition to an *eros* that proceeds from God. Perhaps he took his cue from Ammonius Saccas. This could mean that, of Saccas' two pupils, Plotinus located *eros* in the highest principle, but rejected an *eros* which emanated from this principle, whereas Origen believed that this step could be taken.

It is also interesting to mention that the author who called himself Dionysius the Areopagite<sup>27</sup> talks about the *eros* of God in his treatise on *The Divine Names*, chap. 4, in his discussion of the name 'the Good'. He has clearly been influenced by Proclus, but his argument also shows traces of Origen's exposition on the essence of love. Dionysius speaks very explicitly about an *eros* which proceeds from God—naturally he means the Supreme God—and which causes man to return to Him.<sup>28</sup> Although Dionysius' elaboration of these ideas is somewhat more radical, I believe the ideas themselves can already be read in Origen.

But what did Origen actually have in mind when he identified *eros* and *agape*? Why was he so specially interested in *eros*? It seems to me that Origen was strongly attracted to this powerful conception, which gave a structure to all human endeavour and suggested ideas of inspiration and ardour: a power which proceeds from the divine and thrusts man up to the highest heavens. This idea, this pattern of thought, agrees in large measure with the idea of an *agape* which is in God and flows from God, which has been given to man as a power that strives to return to God.

But is this an equation of Christian faith and philosophy? Of course not. There is a similarity in the pattern of thought, but in terms of content there is a vast difference. This difference is most obvious in the place which Jesus Christ occupies in this structure: he is from God, is love, and gives his Spirit of love. Origen says that Christ is *eros*. He quotes a text of Ignatius: 'My *eros* has been crucified'.<sup>29</sup> This gives Christian love an entirely different

<sup>27</sup> On this author, see A.M. Ritter, 'Dionysios Areopagites', in '*Nimm und lies*'. *Christliche Denker von Origenes bis Erasmus von Rotterdam*. Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 1991, S. 111–126.

<sup>28</sup> See the article by Rist cited in n. 21 and the article by C.J. De Vogel cited in n. 22.

<sup>29</sup> *Ad Rom.* vii, 2. According to most authors, Ignatius means here that his

meaning. The similarity, as I said, lies in the pattern of thought. In both cases there is a power which proceeds from the divine and strives to return to the divine. In both cases the orientation towards man is derivative. 'Love your neighbour' is derived from 'love God'. It is this structural correspondence which allowed Origen to equate *eros* and *agape*.

The same phenomenon occurs with the most famous *image* of the effect of *eros*: Amor who wounds the soul with his arrow. In order to demonstrate that *agape* stands for *amor* in the Song of Songs, Origen quotes the text of Song of Songs 5:8, where the bride says: *τετρωμένη ἀγάπης εἰμὶ ἐγώ*, 'I am wounded with love' or literally 'I am one wounded of love', and he then says that she *of course* means: I have been struck by the arrow of his love.<sup>30</sup> Earlier on in the text, where he talked about the soul which is filled with heavenly love, Origen already mentioned the arrow of God's Word which wounded the soul with love.<sup>31</sup> Here, too, Origen adopts an image but applies it to a new reality.

It seems to me, therefore, that Origen has not, as Nygren believes, sacrificed *agape* to Greek *eros* by identifying *eros* and *agape*. I would rather say: he has incorporated the powerful notion of *eros* in his Christian view. He has christened it, as it were.<sup>32</sup> By employing the concept of *eros* in this way, Origen was saying to

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'earthly love' has been crucified. See the Sources Chrétiennes edition of Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs, part 2, p. 754. Dionysius the Areopagite follows Origen's interpretation of the text. In the article mentioned in n. 21 Rist says: 'I am not as certain as I was in *Eros and Psyche* (p. 206) that Origen and Dionysius have misunderstood Ignatius here,' and he goes on to explain how Ignatius' text should be understood.

<sup>30</sup> *Prol.* 2, 24, Apertissime autem in hoc ipso libello qui habetur in manibus, amoris nomen caritatis vocabulo permutatum est in eo ubi dicit: *Adiuravi vos, filiae Jerusalem, si inveneritis fratruelem meum, ut adnuntietis ei quia vulnerata caritatis ego sum*, pro eo utique ut diceret: Amoris eius telo percussa sum. This image plays an important role in the visual arts, including the Christian visual arts. One of the most famous examples is Bernini's statue in the church of Maria della Vittoria in Rome: the holy Theresa leans back in ecstasy, while Amor in the shape of an angel is about to wound her with his arrow.

<sup>31</sup> Amore autem et cupidine caelesti agitur anima, cum perspecta pulchritudine et decore Verbi Dei speciem eius adamaverit, et ex ipso telum quoddam et vulnus amoris acceperit (*Prol.* 2, 17). In Plato *amor* is also directed at beauty.

<sup>32</sup> We said above that *Eros* was associated with the idea of ardour. This is borne out by a statement of Gregory of Nyssa, one of the three great Cappadocian scholars of the fourth century, who wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs in the footsteps of Origen. His words are: *ἐπιτεταμένη γὰρ ἀγάπη ὁ ἔρως λέγεται*, '*Eros* is the name for an intense *agape*'.

his Platonic colleagues: what you mean by your *eros* I can offer you in a more exalted form. This is a method which the early Christian Apologists particularly liked to use.

## BOOK REVIEW

Origène, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques* I (livres I-II): Texte de la version latine de Rufin, introduction, traduction, et notes; II (Livres III-IV): texte de la version latine de Rufin, traduction, notes et index par Luc Brésard, o.c.s.o., et Henri Crouzel, s.j., avec la collaboration de Marcel Borret, s.j. (Sources Chrétiennes 375 et 376). Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991-1992. 820 p.

Selon Origène le *Cantique des Cantiques* est 'un chant nuptial, écrit par Salomon sous la forme d'un drame' (Prol. 1,1). Salomon met en scène une épouse qui se marie tout inflammée d'amour, un époux qui adresse ses paroles langoureuses à l'épouse, un chœur de jeunes filles autour de l'épouse et un chœur de jeunes gens autour de l'époux. L'époux personnifie le Verbe de Dieu, le Christ; l'épouse c'est l'âme ou l'Église. Origène décrit son programme de la façon suivante: *Haec ergo erit totius libelli species, et secundum hanc pro viribus historica a nobis aptabitur expositio. Spiritualis vero intelligentia, secundum hoc nihilominus quod in praefatione signavimus, vel de ecclesia ad Christum sub sponsae vel sponsi titulo vel de animae cum Verbo Dei coniunctione dirigitur* (I 1,2). L'auteur propose de donner d'abord une explication 'historique', c'est-à-dire il explique le texte du drame dans son sens obvie. Le Père Crouzel, qui a rédigé l'Introduction parle ici du sens littéral. Il explique ce terme en remarquant que ce sens 'ne représente pas l'intention de l'auteur, mais la matérialité même de ce qui est dit; dans un langage figuré comme ici, le sens littéral est la figure employée, le sens spirituel ou allégorique ce que signifie la figure' (p. 19). Cette explication est correcte. Mais il vaut la peine de constater qu'Origène (dans la traduction du Rufin) emploie une autre terminologie: *historica expositio* (texte cité au-dessus et I 4,1), *historici dramatis explanatio* (II, 7,1; II 9,2), *historicus sensus* (II 11,3), *quasi historicus intellectus* (I 5,2), etc. Dans un cas (II 11,1) il parle d'une *explanatio litterae ipsius*, mais il s'agit alors de la signification d'un seul mot (*cyprus*).

Après le sens 'historique' Origène développe ce qui est pour lui la vraie signification du texte, c'est-à-dire l'intelligence spirituelle, qui concerne la double relation, soit de l'Église au Christ, soit de l'âme au Verbe. L'explication qui concerne la relation entre l'âme et le

Verbe est [413] nommée par Origène 'la troisième explication' (*tertia explicatio* I 2,23; I 4,7; II 12,12). Au ch. I 1,9 Origène dit: *Tertio vero expositionis loco introducamus animam ...* On traduit: 'Mais dans une troisième partie de l'explication, mettons en scène une âme ...' Je préférerais: 'Mais dans l'explication qui vient en troisième lieu ...', ou simplement: 'Dans la troisième explication ...' Origène a annoncé cette explication (voyez la citation donnée au-dessus); d'où l'article défini dans la traduction; il ne s'agit pas d'une troisième partie d'une explication mais d'une troisième explication. (Dans la neuvième note complémentaire le Père Borret se demande si cette troisième explication a peut-être affaire au troisième sens de l'Écriture, le sens moral, qu'on trouvera souvent chez Origène à côté des sens littéral et mystique. Le Père Borret écarte à bon droit cette interprétation. Effectivement cette troisième explication propose un deuxième sens spirituel ou mystique).

La présente édition de ce texte extrêmement intéressant est le résultat d'une collaboration de Luc Brésard, moine de Cîteaux, et des Pères Crouzel et Borret, deux auteurs bien connus en ce domaine. Le Frère Brésard a traduit le texte, il l'a divisé en chapitres et paragraphes; il a rédigé une partie des notes et il a décrit la réception du Commentaire et, plus en général, l'influence d'Origène. Au Père Crouzel sont dues la rédaction de l'introduction, une révision de la traduction et nombre de notes importantes. Au Père Borret on doit une seconde révision de la traduction et la plupart des notes complémentaires qui se trouvent dans le second volume. Quant au texte latin on a reproduit à peu de choses près le texte de la collection G.C.S. (Baehrens).

Le texte latin a été imprimé de façon impeccable. (Une coquille seulement: lire *hic* au lieu de *hoc* en III 13,9.)

Deux petites questions textuelles: au ch. II 5,10 Origène dit: *Sed et in eo opus videtur esse animae cognoscentis semet ipsam, si haec ipsa quae operatur mala ex affectu ea et studio operetur an fragilitate quadam ...* Avec Delarue, et contre Baehrens, on insère après *semet ipsam* le verbe <scire>. A mon avis cette insertion est superflue, parce qu'on trouve une construction identique, sans *scire*, deux paragraphes plus loin: *Adhuc et istud opus est animae cognoscentis se, si gloriae multum cupida sit aut parum aut omnino nihil* (II 5,12). — Au ch. IV 2,15 Origène explique les mots de Cant. 2,14 '*Vox tua suavis*': *Suavis autem est vox animae, cum Verbum Dei loquitur, cum de fide et dogmatibus veritatis exponit ...* Ici on écrit *Verbum* avec majuscule et on traduit:

‘Or «la voix» de l’âme est «douce» lorsqu’elle parle *du* Verbe de Dieu ...’. [414] Mais alors le texte latin devrait être *de Verbo Dei loquitur*. Il faut, à mon avis, suivre Baehrens et écrire *verbum* en minuscule et traduire littéralement: ‘lorsqu’elle parle le verbe de Dieu’, ou mieux ‘lorsqu’elle rend la parole de Dieu’.

On a affaire ici à un texte très bien élaboré; Origène y présente beaucoup de ses idées propres. Dans l’Introduction le Père Crouzel discute d’une façon claire quelques aspects de la pensée origénienne (christologie, ecclésiologie, anthropologie).

La traduction française est en général exacte et claire. Quelques passages toutefois méritent d’être approfondis.

Au ch. I 1,10 Origène explique les premiers mots du Cantique des Cantiques ‘*Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui*’ dans la troisième explication, c’est-à-dire en tant qu’ils s’appliquent à la relation entre l’âme et le Verbe. L’âme prie, dit Origène, que son intelligence soit éclairée par les illuminations. Et alors il explique: *Cum enim nullo hominis vel angeli ministerio divinis sensibus et intellectibus mens repletur, tunc oscula ipsius Verbi Dei suscepisse se credat*. Que signifie ici le terme *sensus*? On rend le couple *sensus et intellectus* par ‘significations et compréhension’. Dans une note le Père Borret qualifie cette traduction comme un ‘traduction littérale’. Et il ajoute: ‘Mais *sensus* et *intellectus* n’indiquent pas nécessairement une distinction entre l’ordre de la sensation et celui de l’intelligence. Parfois *sensus* référera au domaine de sens spirituels de l’âme ..., mais souvent la différence entre le deux termes reste assez obscure’ (citation de J. Chênevert, *L’Église dans le Commentaire d’Origène sur le Cantique des Cantiques*). Par le mot ‘Mais’ cette remarque semble suggérer que dans la traduction ‘littérale’, donnée ici, on fait une distinction entre l’ordre de la sensation et celui de l’intelligence. Mais les ‘significations’ appartiennent-elle à l’ordre de la sensation? Au chap. II 1,39 on traduit *multitudinem sensuum suorum et intellectuum* par ‘la multitude de ses façons de penser et de comprendre’. Cela me paraît être plus près de la vraie signification de ce couple de termes, aussi en I 1,10. J’attire l’attention sur ce couple, parce qu’Origène (Rufin) en fait usage à plusieurs reprises (I, 1,11,12,14 et 15).

Au chap. II 2,1 Origène dit: *Si competenter nobis videtur aptata expositio quam in superioribus ... texuimus*. Traduction: ‘Si nous semble pertinemment appropriée l’explication que nous avons élaborée plus haut’. Peut-on supposer qu’Origène dirait cela? A mon avis, il faut combiner *nobis* avec *aptata* et le considérer comme *dativus*

*auctoris*: 'S'il semble (à vous, les lecteurs) que nous avons donné une explication appropriée...' [415]

Au chap. III 13,9 on lit: *Paulus nos Apostolus docet quod invisibilia Dei ex visibilibus intelligantur et ea quae non videntur ex eorum quae videntur ratione et similitudine contemplantur ...* On traduit '*ratione et similitudine*' par 'à partir de «la raison seminale» et de la ressemblance avec les choses qui se voient', et on ajoute une note sur le thème stoicien du λόγος σπερματικός (et une note complémentaire sur le même sujet, p.780-782). A mon avis, il ne s'agit pas ici des «raisons seminales», c'est-à-dire des principes spermatiques dans les choses, mais de la relation entre les choses invisibles et les choses qui se voient. Cette relation est réciproque. En III 13,12 Origène dit que les choses terrestres habeant *aliquid in caelestibus similitudinis ac rationis*. A mon avis, Lawson, dans la série *Ancient Christian Writers*, donne une traduction correcte: 'through their relationship and likeness to things seen'. Dans le même chapitre on trouve aussi les couples '*speciem et imaginem*' (III 13,13) et '*formas et imaginem*' (III 13,14) pour exprimer la même relation. Dans ce chapitre les 'raisons seminales' sont loin de la pensée origénienne.

Il reste un problème plus compliqué, notamment l'interprétation qu'on donne dans cette édition de la relation entre *amor* (ἔρως) et *dilectio* (ἀγάπη) dans cet ouvrage d'Origène.

Dans le deuxième chapitre du Prologue Origène discute comme une des questions préliminaires le problème de la nature de l'amour. D'abord il constate que chez les Grecs beaucoup de savants ont essayé 'de montrer que la force de l'amour n'est pas autre chose que celle qui conduit l'âme de la terre aux cimes élevées du ciel, et qu'on ne peut parvenir à la suprême béatitude si le désir de l'amour n'y invite' (Prol. 2,1). Mais il y avaient des hommes charnels qui ont appliqué ces expositions à leurs désires vicieux (*Ibid.*)

Pour éviter une faute semblable, la sainte Écriture a voulu éviter le mot *amor* (ἔρως); elle fait usage d'un terme plus noble, charité ou dilection (ἀγάπη) (Prol. 2,20). Mais parfois on trouve dans l'Écriture le terme *amor* (ἔρως) dans un contexte où il n'y a aucune erreur possible. Ainsi elle parle de l'amour (ἔρως) de la sagesse, parce qu'il n'y a aucune occasion de l'interpréter comme un amour passionnelle (Prol. 2,23).

Il est évident que, selon Origène, ἔρως et ἀγάπη ne diffèrent pas quant à leurs objets. Là où l'Écriture emploie le terme ἀγάπη elle aurait pu employer le terme ἔρως. Origène le dit lui-même (Prol.

2,33): *Sic ergo quaecumque de caritate (ἀγάπη) scripta sunt, quasi de amore (ἔρως) dicta suscipe nihil de nominibus curans; eadem namque in utroque virtus* [416] *ostenditur*. Or, c'est une question de mots, pas d'objets. Les deux mots ont la même *virtus*.

Toutefois on trouve auprès du texte de Prol. 2,20, sur l'ἀγάπη comme terme plus noble, la note suivante: 'Selon la distinction fréquente aujourd'hui, ἀγάπη dénote plutôt un amour de bienveillance, oblatif et désintéressé: l'amour de dilection. Ἔρως est au contraire l'amour passion, l'amour des amants. Mais ici, Origène oppose simplement par leur objet ἀγάπη, l'amour spirituel, à ἔρως l'amour charnel'.

On trouve les mêmes idées dans l'Introduction (p. 32). Évidemment on prend ses distances avec la thèse bien connue de Nygren, mais on crée une autre opposition entre les deux termes, qui n'a pas non plus un fondement dans le texte origénien. Il est remarquable que le Père Borret semble confirmer notre interprétation, quand il écrit dans la troisième note complémentaire: 'Origène vient d'identifier les sens des termes ἀγάπη et ἔρως et de les dire également propres à désigner Dieu'.

Après avoir dit que l'Écriture préfère le terme ἀγάπη à ἔρως, parce qu'il est un *vocabulum honestius*, et après avoir cité deux exemples (Isaac qui *dilexit Rebekkam* et Jacob qui *dilexit Rachel*), Origène dit: *Evidentius autem immutata vis vocabuli huius apparet in Amnon, qui adamavit sororem suam Thamar; scriptum est enim: 'Et factum est post haec et erat Absalon filio David soror decora specie valde, et nomen ei Thamar, et dilexit eam Amnon filius David'. Dilexit posuit pro adamavit*. On traduit: 'Or la signification inchangée de ce mot apparaît clairement à propos d'Amnon, qui devient amoureux passionné de Thamar sa sœur ... On a mis «Il la chérit» au lieu de «Il en devient amoureux»'. Ce texte aurait du avertir le(s) traducteur(s), parce qu'il contredit ce qu'il est dit dans la note sur la différence entre ἔρως et ἀγάπη. Car on ne peut pas nier que l'amour d'Amnon était un amour charnel. Or, selon la thèse formulée dans la note Origène aurait dû faire usage du terme ἔρως (*amor*). Mais ce qu'Origène veut souligner ici est le fait que, même dans le cas d'Amnon, l'Écriture choisit le terme ἀγάπη. Alors ἀγάπη peut aussi signifier un amour charnel, dans ce cas un amour incestueux. Par conséquent la traduction 'la signification *inchangée*' ne peut être juste, parce que la signification a été changée (d'amour spirituel à l'amour charnel). Les mots '*immutata vis vocabuli*' ont été expliqués par Origène lui-

même dans les mots '*Dilexit posuit pro adamavit*'. Autrement dit, par les mots '*immutata vis vocabuli*' Origène réfère au choix de ce '*honestius vocabulum*'. Il ne s'agit pas d'une 'signification inchangée', mais du choix de ce 'vocabule avec sa force différente (changée)', [417] qui devient encore plus claire (*evidentius*) dans le cas d'Amnon (*Immutatus*, il est vrai, peut signifier 'inchangé', mais l'usage comme participe parfait d'*immutare*, 'changer', est beaucoup plus fréquent.)

Il me semble que les éditeurs de ce texte n'ont pas suffisamment observé l'optique d'Origène dans ce chapitre sur la nature de l'amour. Le point de départ d'Origène est une haute estimation de ce que signifie l'ἔρως. Il est conscient du fait que l'Écriture évite ce terme, mais cela ne dit rien au détriment de l'ἔρως. L'Écriture aurait pu employer ce terme aussi bien qu'ἀγάπη. Il est même permis de dire 'Dieu est ἔρως' au lieu de 'Dieu est ἀγάπη' (Prol. 2,36). Bien qu'on s'oppose à la thèse de Nygren, on semble néanmoins partir d'une opposition entre ἔρως et ἀγάπη. Pour Origène cette opposition n'existe pas. (Voyez l'article de Mme C.J. de Vogel, 'Greek Cosmic Love and the Christian Love of God', *Vigiliae Christianae* 35, 1981, 47-81, dans lequel elle réagit contre J.M. Rist, *Eros and Psyche*, Toronto Press, 1964, 1967. Voyez aussi J.M. Rist, 'A note on Eros and Agape in Pseudo-Dionysius', *Vig. Chr.* 20, 1960, 235-243, un article qui semble avoir échappé à l'attention de Mme de Vogel, mais qui est intéressant aussi pour l'interprétation d'Origène.)

Que les auteurs considèrent les remarques comme un signe de notre haute appréciation de leur précieuse édition de ce texte extrêmement importante.

J. C. M. VAN WINDEN  
BIBLIOGRAPHY 1954–1997

*Note from the editors.* In the following list we present a complete bibliography of all the publications of J. C. M. van Winden. We decided also to include a list of his book reviews, and in particular those in 'his' *Vigiliae Christianae*, because these have been such a prominent aspect of his scholarly activity during the past decades. Articles and book reviews marked with an asterisk are included in this volume.

1. *Books and articles*

1954

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1959

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1962

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1963

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1964

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## 1966

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## 1967

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## 1975

- 'On the Date of Athanasius' Apologetical Treatises', *VChr* 29 (1975) 291-295.\*

## 1976

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## 1977

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- 'Quotations from Philo in Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*', *VChr* 32 (1978) 208-213.\*  
'Didyme l'Aveugle *Sur la Genèse* I,10. A propos d'une première édition', *VChr* 32 (1978) 60-65

## 1979

- 'A Textual Problem in Gregory of Nyssa, *Apologia in Hexaemeron*, ch. 69', *VChr* 33 (1979) 179.\*  
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The references to ancient authors and writings collected in this index are divided into three categories:

1. Index of Biblical Passages
2. Index of Christian authors (including the Jewish author Philo)
3. Index of non-Christian authors.

The reader who uses the index should bear in mind that there has been some variation in the citation of authors in the course of more than thirty years of scholarly activity. Some references in the index have been streamlined, leading to discrepancies with the method of citation in the text of the article.

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